



THE HISTORIE
OF
ARTHUR OF
LITTLE
BRITAYNE.

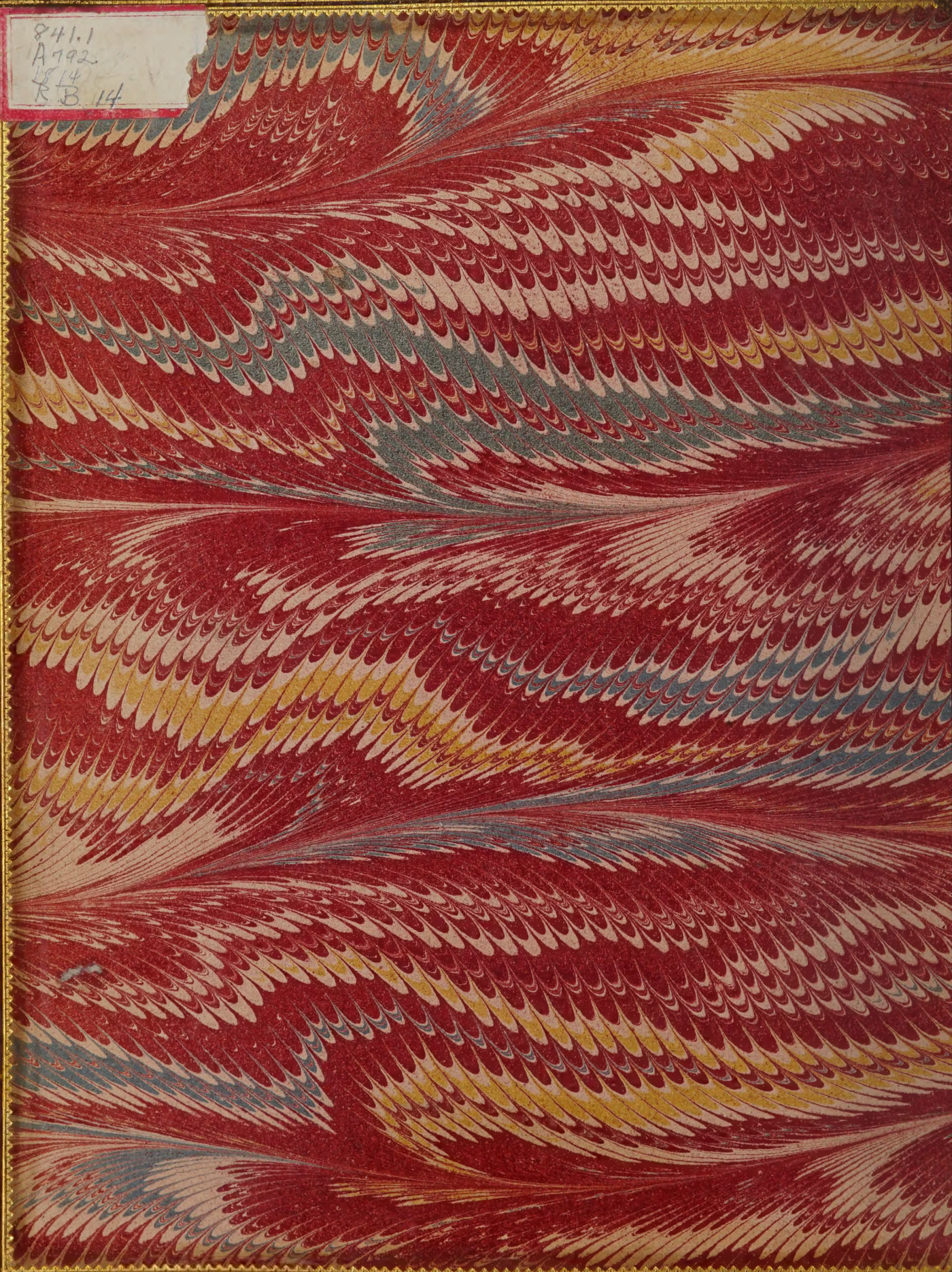
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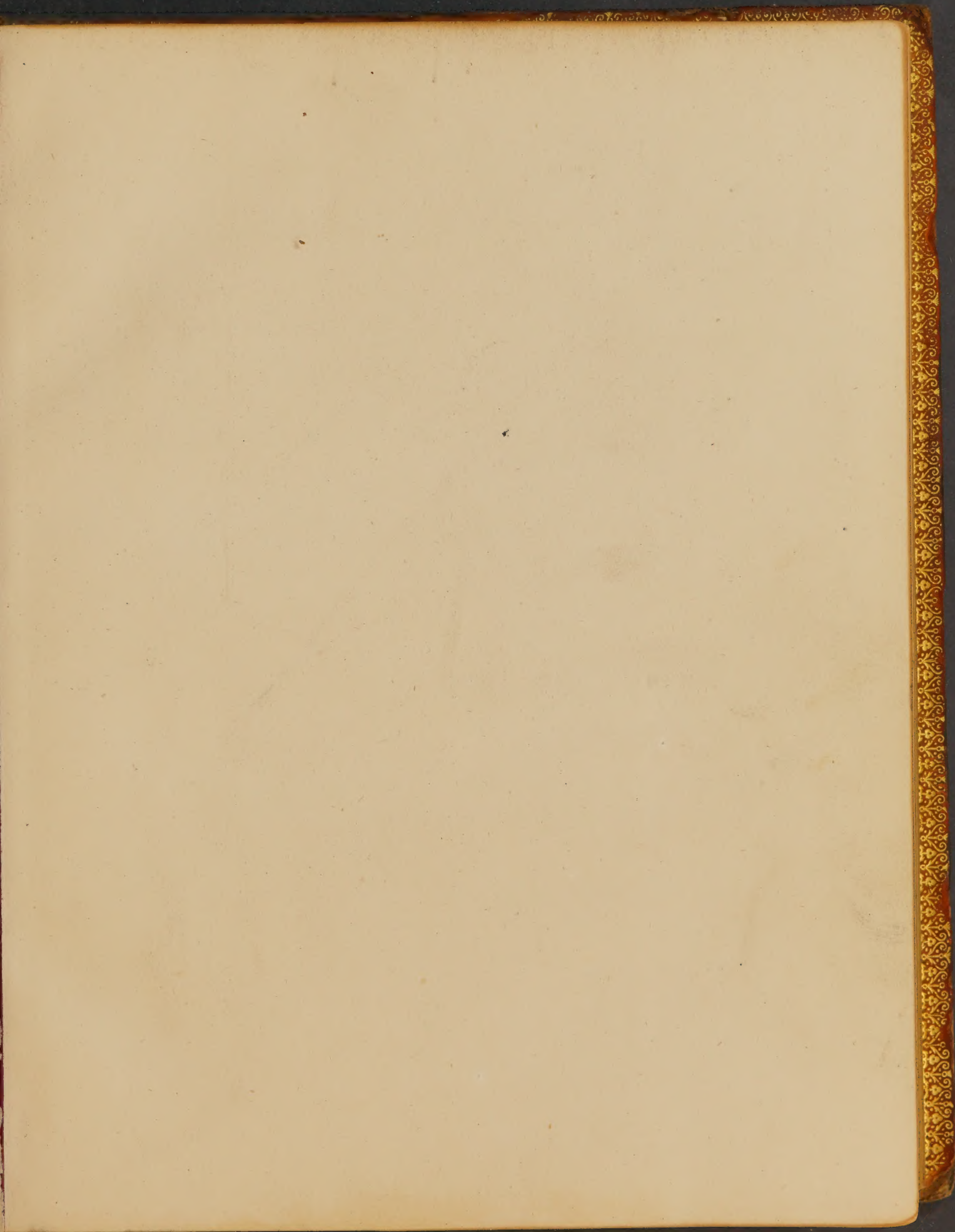


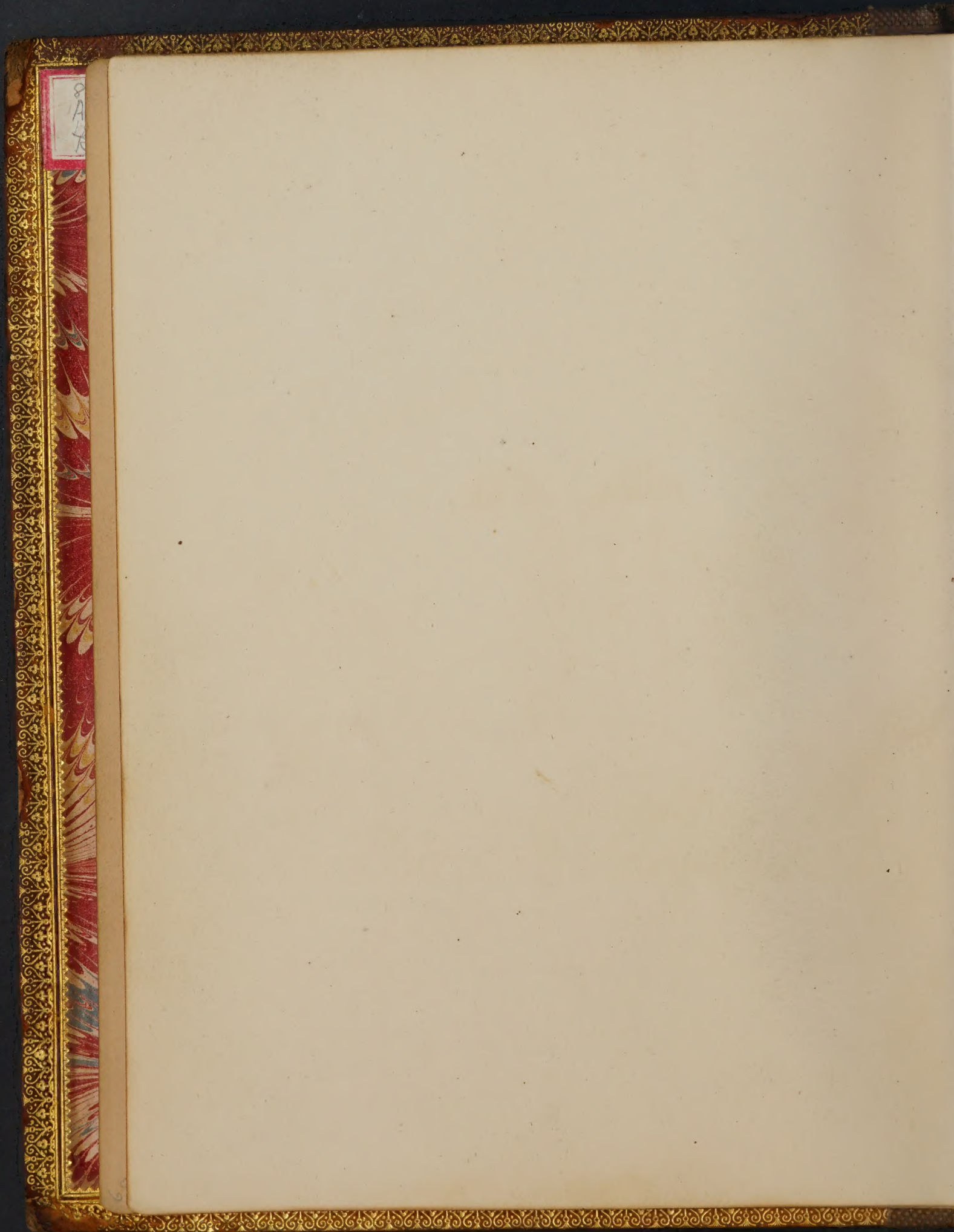


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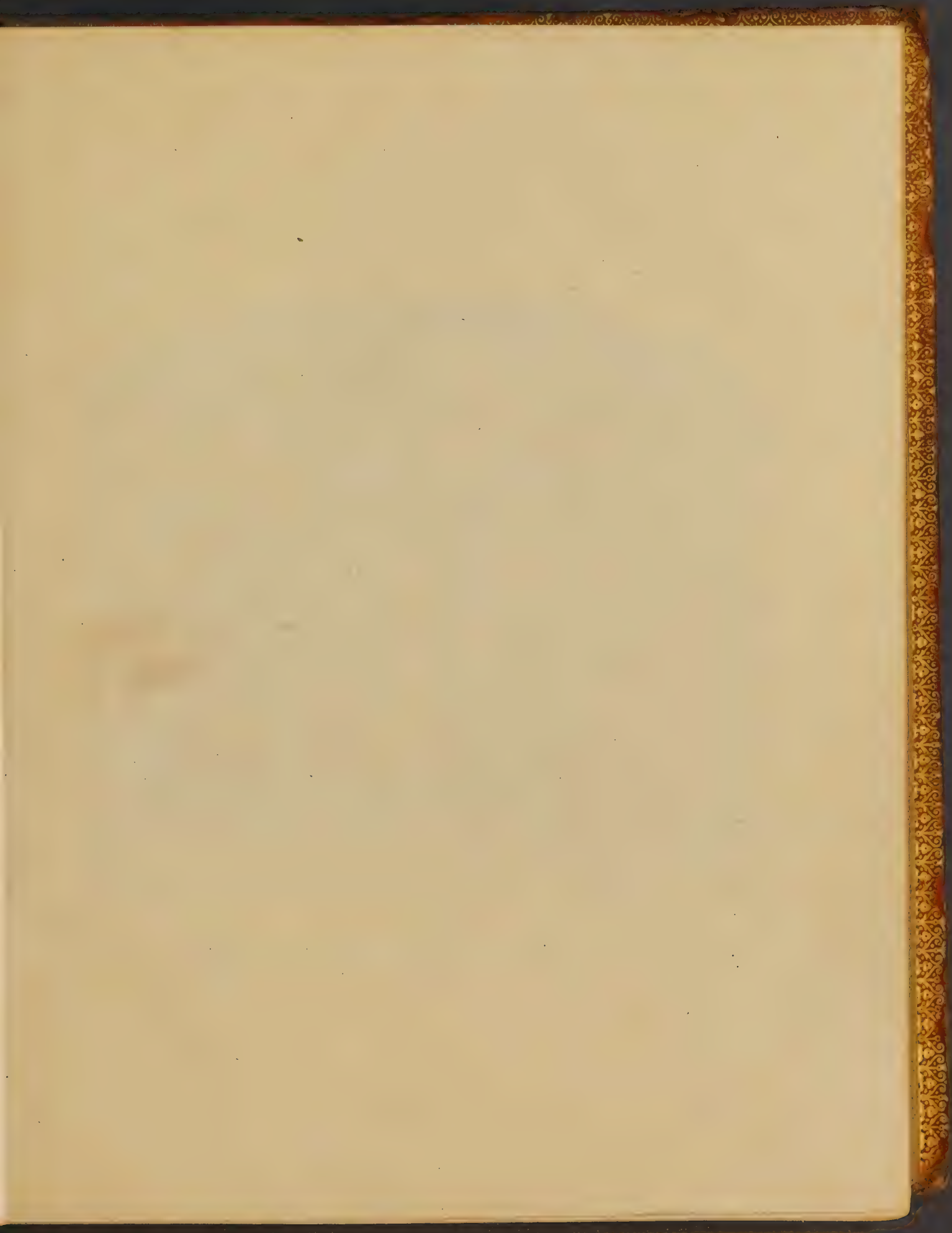


Plate 1.

Frontispiece.



THE
HISTORY
OF
The Valiant Knight
ARTHUR OF LITTLE BRITAIN.

A Romance of Chivalry.

ORIGINALLY TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH
BY
JOHN BOURCHIER, LORD BERNERS.

A NEW EDITION:

WITH A SERIES OF PLATES, FROM ILLUMINATED DRAWINGS CONTAINED
IN A VALUABLE MS. OF THE ORIGINAL ROMANCE.

“ Now hold your mouth your charite,
“ Bothe knight and lady fre,
“ And herkeneth to my spell.
“ Of bataille, and of chevalrie,
“ Of ladies loue, and druerie,
“ Anon I wol you tell.” CHAUCER.

LONDON:
PRINTED FOR WHITE, COCHRANE, AND CO., FLEET STREET.

1814.

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THE
EDITOR'S PREFACE.

THE Old Romance of *Arthur of Little Britain* has strong claims on the attention of those who are attached to this species of composition. In the incidents, although devoid of historical accuracy, we discover strong traces of invention; and the continual references to the habits and customs of the ages of chivalry, afford a clear and amusing comment on the usages of that very interesting period. To the English reader, the translation, of which the following is an accurate reprint, particularly recommends itself, as it was made by Lord Berners, whose valuable Version of Froissart's Chronicles, together with other works, has rendered his name deservedly dear to the admirers of our early literature. This, from his prologue, would appear to be one of his first productions; but, on the other hand, it seems to indicate less adoption of French words, or rather a more full acquaintance with the English language, than his Froissart: at all events it discovers the same unaffected energy of composition, and elegant simplicity of style, which characterize that, his greatest work.

Rare as is a perfect copy of his Froissart, much rarer to be found is *The Hystory of Arthur of Lytle Brytayne*; and the Editor thinks, therefore, that he is not doing an unacceptable

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service to the antiquary * and the man of letters, by giving to the world a correct reprint of a work, which must be as necessarily useful to the former, as probably amusing to the latter.

The Count de Tressan, in his † very elegant selections from the early romances of chivalry, has entered into a pleasing analysis of the original work ; but if the reader expects to find in that abridgement a correct epitome of this romance, great, indeed, will be his disappointment. The Count has given various particulars, which might be, perhaps, necessary to excite the attention of the Parisian world to the perusal, but which form no part of the parent work ; and he has, without the slightest explanation or apology, entirely varied the *denouement*, as well as other portions of the narrative. Indeed the greater part of the tale which professes to be abstracted from the original, is the production of M. de Tressan's own brain. It might be almost supposed that he had not read the original ; but that taking his information from the recital of another, he had supplied, from his own imagination, the chasms which his informant's want of recollection made in the tale. He professes to make his extract from the Paris edition, printed by Bonfons in 1584 ; yet in the passages which he selects as specimens of the "*vieux langage*," he has been equally inattentive ; he has interpolated as well as omitted.

* See St. Palaye's remarks on the reading of ancient romances, in his *Mémoires sur l'Ancienne Chevalerie*, vol. ii. p. 107. in which he points out the advantages to be derived by the antiquary from the perusal of this class of writings. Monsieur Le Grand also says : " Quiconque a un peu lu et s'est accoutumé à lire avec attention, sait, que non-seulement chaque peuple a son stile propre et sa façon de conter ; mais encore, que dans les ouvrages de pure imagination, tels que les Romans, et dans ceux même des Romans qui ne sont composés que des fictions les plus extravagantes, on voit les mœurs, le caractère, l'esprit d'une nation, peints d'une manière aussi vraie, et souvent plus saillante, que dans son histoire même."—*Preface au Fabliaux ou Contes*, &c. Paris, 1781, tom. i. p. lxx.

† *Corps d'Extraits de Romans de Chevalerie*. Paris, 1782. tom. i. p. 184.

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The period at which the original work was written is unknown; and it is only from circumstances appearing in the tale itself that the date of the composition can be conjectured. That it was produced long subsequent to *THE ROMANCES OF THE ROUND TABLE*, has been supposed, because the hero is not selected from the gallant chivalry which surrounded the throne of Arthur. It is true that he is derived from the blood of Lancelot du lac; but a period is fixed for his existence, which appears much posterior to that knight's achievements. In addition to this, one of the characters introduced is, the Marshal de Mirepoix, a title which first existed in the reign of Louis the Young, who mounted the throne A. D. 1137. The learned compiler of the catalogue* of books which belonged to the Chevalier de Sardiere, expressing his surprise that the author had not chosen his hero from one of the three great families of chivalry, (viz. the Knights of Arthur, the Blood of Amadis, and the Paladins of Charlemagne), conjectures that it was composed towards the latter end of the fourteenth or beginning of the fifteenth century, during the reign of Charles VI. of France. As one ground for this opinion, he states, the hatred which the writer discovers towards the Count of Armagnac, who was of the faction of the Duke of Orleans; and in addition, he considers, that the dresses and customs portrayed in the work, lead to the same conclusion.

The Count de Tressan adopting the latter idea, for supposing such to be the date of the composition, suggests also other reasons for his belief. He discovers a strong resemblance in the language to that of Froissart, a writer contemporaneous with Charles VI.: the influence of the spirit which actuated the court of England

* "Catalogue des Livres de la Bibliothèque de feu Mr. J. B. Denis Guyon Chev. Seigneur de Sardiere, ancien Capitaine au Régiment du Roi, et l'un des Seigneurs du Canal de Briare." Paris, 1759.

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became, at this period, predominant in France; and he traces, he says, in the romances of this period, a marked anxiety to give celebrity to every thing connected with England.—If by the latter assertion he means to infer, that from the compliments paid to this kingdom in the romance, he finds an additional argument in favour of his hypothesis respecting the period when the work was composed, I must confess myself totally unconvinced by his reasoning; since there is nothing throughout the work, which I have been able to discover, that in any degree tends to exalt the English character: and, in fact, the only allusion to England is the matrimonial alliance formed between Arthur's father and the daughter of the Earl of Lancaster in England; this supposition, therefore, is too absurd to be reasoned on. We know that Le Laboureur, Brantome, and other French writers, for a long period accused the gallant Froissart of undue partiality to the English: and from the frequency of the charge, its truth became generally credited. It remained, however, for the candid St. Palaye to disprove this ridiculous accusation, but which could not prevent Tressan from making one equally unfounded with respect to the work before us. Assuredly any person attentively perusing this work, cannot hesitate for a moment to believe that it was the production of a Frenchman; and of a Frenchman fully possessing the characteristic vanity of his country. No stronger proof need be adduced of the truth of this observation, than the continual inflated compliments which the author pays to the appearance and gallantry of the French knights, who accompanied the Duke of Brittany into the realms of King Emendus, when he went to the relief of the fair Florence*.

From the circumstance of Hector, son of the Count of Blois,

* Would any writer attached to England at that period, with the knowledge of the infraction of the treaty of Bretigny so fresh in his recollection, utter the warm encomium on the "*good faith*" of Frenchmen, which we find at ch. cii. p. 483?

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receiving the honour of knighthood at the same time with his cousin Arthur; and from the determination of the latter (as M. de Tressan asserts,) to repair the misfortunes and losses which the father of Hector had experienced, the Count derives an additional argument that this romance was composed in the reign of Charles VI.; as at that period the descendants of Charles de Châtillon, Count of Blois, were dispossessed of their property, and set up a claim to their lawful right to the dutchy of Brittany.

In the first place, the Count reasons on false data; there is nothing in the *original* which justifies the assertion that Arthur promised to repair the losses which the Count of Blois had suffered; the only passage relative to the subject, but which can in no wise be tortured to the meaning sought to be given to it by M. de Tressan, is that, in which the old Count states his determination not to part with his fief to his son whilst he lives, and the possibility that the sovereignty may be taken from both of them; a circumstance which in reality never happened.

It appears difficult, therefore, to conclude from the *text*, that any such meaning as assumed by M. de Tressan was intended by the author. In addition to this, an acute and able writer*, the Abbé Rive, has clearly proved that there were no historical events in the reign of Charles VI. to warrant such an assumption. Charles VI. commenced his reign in 1380, and which continued to 1422. The Abbé Rive has entered into a lengthened detail of the history of

* The Abbé Rive published a thin tract in 4to. describing two MSS. Romances in the Collection of the Duc de la Valliere, entitled, *Notices Historiques et Critiques de deux Manuscrits de la Bibliothèque de M. le Duc de la Valliere, dont l'un a pour titre 'Le Roman d'Artus, Conte de Bretagne;' et l'autre, 'Le Rommant de Perteney ou de Lusignan.'* Paris, 1779.—For the perusal of this curious and scarce volume I am indebted to Mr. Douce, whose kindness on this, and other occasions, I acknowledge with gratitude.

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the House of Châtillon or Blois, and of the events in which it was engaged from the year 1341 to 1433; in the whole of which long period nothing is found that can, in any shape, corroborate the Count de Tressan's argument.

Although the Abbé Rive seems inclined to believe that the period conjectured for the composition of this Romance was that above mentioned; yet he denies also the force of his countryman's argument, founded on the similarity of the language to that of Froissart. Nothing, he says, can be less solid. He considers it a substantial answer to such reasoning, that those who might be employed to copy the MS. would adapt the language to the taste of their own age; a conjecture which is warranted by so many instances in which ancient works have been modernised.

After all, perhaps the best argument in favour of this Romance having been composed at, or about the period above alluded to, is to be found in the reference to the dresses and habits of the 15th century. Continual descriptions of the costume in which the parties are clothed occur; and some of them are so marked, as to correspond most exactly with the figures portrayed in the illuminations of some of our early MSS.

At cap. ii. p. 3. we are informed, that "Arthur was mounted on a grete courser, his hat hangyng on his back by a lace of sylke, his bonet on his head," &c.—We have only to refer to the frontispiece to the 2d volume of Strutt's *Dress and Habits*, and we discover the precise garb in which Arthur was clothed. This print is an accurate copy from an illumination in a most beautiful MS. of the *Roman de la Rose*, in the British Museum, *Harl.* 4425; supposed to be executed in the 15th century.

In cap. xxv. p. 62. Arthur and his companions meet with "a messenger, with a javelyn in his hande, & scochen of arms on his breste," &c.—This description, perhaps, does not so completely

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assist us in our researches as the former one, although we may still derive some benefit from it. The accurate and inquisitive Strutt says, that the earliest representation of a messenger is in a MS. of the 13th century, *Harleian*, 1528; where he is described with a small shield, blazoned with arms, fastened to his *left* side, but carrying no weapon. In the ensuing century we find that the herald carried the blazoned shield behind him, and that he was armed with a spear. He is thus delineated in Strutt's *Dress and Habits*, in pl. LXXXIII, which is copied from a drawing in MS. Roy. 16. G. vi. In the above-mentioned *Roman de la Rose*, a messenger is frequently represented; but in every instance he bears the arms of his master on his breast, and carries no weapon. In the 15th century, Strutt says the small shield of arms was discontinued; and the tabard, the modern state garb of a herald, was substituted for it*. Reasoning, therefore, from these circumstances, it may be said, that this Romance boasts an earlier date than that before assigned to it, and that it was the production of the early part of the 14th century, if not written in the one preceding. As it is impossible, however, to define the exact time at which fashions in dress have varied or ceased, it becomes difficult to decide, on such evidence alone, the date of any work of antiquity.

In the absence, nevertheless, of positive proof on the subject, there appears tolerably strong negative evidence from the work itself, against its being composed so late as the period assigned to it by the respectable authorities above mentioned; and which evidence I am not aware has been before brought forward.

In cap. civ. p. 497. when the Emperor's host was about to be attacked by Arthur and the French knights his auxiliaries, we are told that "there yssued fyrst oute the baner of Britaine wyth the

* Yet we are told, on good authority, that messengers wore the arms of their employers on their breasts, or left shoulders, so late as the end of the 16th century. — *Œuvres de Fauchet*, ed. 1610, p. 517.

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chequered armes*." This passage will afford us some assistance in the research, as to the point of time when the minstrel or herald produced this Romance. It should seem that the arms borne by the dutchy of Brittany were entirely, in heraldic phrase, "ermine," until the year 1213†. About that period, Philip Augustus, King of France, exercising the privilege which the feudal doctrine of wardship vested in him, married Alice the heiress of Brittany, daughter of Guy de Thouar and the unfortunate Constance (whose sorrows have been made familiar to us by our great dramatic poet), to Pierre de Dreux, surnamed Mauclerc. This young lady had, in her infancy, been betrothed by the monarch to the Count de Penthievre, a nobleman nearly allied to the throne. It is supposed, however, that Philip was apprehensive that the princely domain of Brittany, added to the Count's patrimonial territory, would render him too powerful a subject; and the youthful, but richly endowed heiress, was therefore assigned over to Pierre de Dreux. The first Count of Dreux was the fourth son

* In both the MSS. hereafter mentioned this distinction of '*chequered*' arms is not to be found; yet it exists in the edition of Bonfons, 1584; the only French printed copy to which I have been able to refer. Mr. Douce, whose knowledge on this point may be safely relied on, attributes the probable date of these MSS. to the 15th century; and a fair inference, therefore, may be drawn, that the printed edition was taken from an earlier MS. than either of those above referred to. It would have been futile in the printer to interpolate such a phrase; since it could not flatter any national or individual feeling to particularize an impress on the shield of Brittany, which had long ceased to exist. On the other hand, it seems probable the later MSS. would, by adapting the language (according to the Abbé Rive's supposition) and the usages to existing institutions, omit a circumstance which had become disused and antiquated. Still, however, in an illumination in one of these MSS. a knight appears, whose shield is correctly emblazoned with the *checky or* and *azure*, which is copied in this edition.

† FAUCHET, 514. On the other hand, Lobineau, speaking of Pierre de Dreux, says: "C'est lui qui a apporté les ermines en Bretagne."—*Histoire de Bretagne*, Paris, 1707, tom. i. 197.

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of Louis le Gros, who flourished in the 12th century : this house bore for arms "*chequée or et azure.*" By his above-mentioned descendant the checky was first introduced into the shield of Brittany : he, however, quartered the ermine with it in the dexter chief*.

This continued to be the armorial bearing of the dutchy until the sovereignty of John the III^d ; who about the year 1317† altogether excluded the checky, retaining the ermine alone ; which ever since (or at least up to the period of the French Revolution) has been the distinguishing insignia of the province of Brittany. John III. died in 1341, and on the shield attached to the recumbent figure on his monument, nothing appears but the ermine.

From hence a fair inference arises that this Romance was written long prior to the reign of Charles VI., and that it must have been composed even anterior to the accession of Duke John III., when the chequers ceased to form part of the arms of the dutchy. It has been supposed by M. La Curne de

* Amongst the Cotton MSS. in the British Museum, is an old French poem relative to the achievements of those who assisted Edward I. at the siege of Kaerlaverok, A. D. 1300 ; and in which the arms of John of Brittany are described as above, and are thus particularized :

" Banniere avoit cointé et parée

" De or e de asur eschequeré

" Au rouge ourle o jaunes lupars

" De ermine estoit la quart pars."

Caligula, A. xviii. rev. fol. 23.

Warton in his History of English Poetry has very inaccurately transcribed this passage : he has introduced the word "*determine*" at the beginning of the fourth line ; thus altering entirely (or rather rendering unintelligible) the sense. The above blazon perfectly agrees with that in the early chronicler, who, speaking of the alteration introduced by Pierre Mauclerc, says, "*Portoit en ses armes ung eschiquier dor et dazur borde de gueulles a petiz liepars dor, et a lescu ung quartier dermines.*"

—*Les Grandes Croniques de Bretagne*, 1532, rev. fol. 86.

† Lobineau, *Hist. de Bretagne*, tom. i. p. 302.

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St. Palaye*, that most of the romances of chivalry were composed by heralds†; (we actually know that several of them were so‡); and we may easily believe that such an officer could not be ignorant, in that warlike age, that the checky had ceased to be the impress of Brittany; an event so important in the contemplation of those, whose time and attention must naturally have been directed to the inquiry||.

The MSS. of this Romance, now in existence, are not numerous§: Montfaucon particularizes only *three*. In the Collection of the late Duke of Roxburghe, was that which was formerly in the possession of the Duc de la Valliere, referred to by the Abbé Rive, and which is now in my possession: it is on paper, and from the writing appears to be of the 15th century. Previous to its becoming the property of the Duke of Roxburghe, it had been in the Crevenna Collection. Another, on vellum, is in the possession of Lord Thurlow. To his lordship's kindness, in allowing me the free use of this MS., and his liberality in permitting some of the beautiful illuminations which adorn it to be copied, for the pur-

* *Memoires sur l'Ancienne Chevalerie*, tom. ii. p. 123; and see also Menestrier *sur Chevalerie Ancienne et Moderne*, ch. v. p. 225; and Warton's *Hist. of Eng. Poetry*, vol. i. p. 331, et seq.

† The *trouveurs* and minstrels seem to have considered this as an attack on their privileges, and accordingly resented it. Serious disputes arose between them and the heralds, in the reign of Philip Augustus; to use the words of Fauchet (my authority), "Je croy pour leurs estats."—*Œuvres de Fauchet*, 1610, rev. f. 516.

‡ *La Toison d'Or*; *l'Histoire du Petit Jehan de Saintré*, by Anthoine de la Salle; also *Ogier le Danoys*, *Berthe au Grand-pied*, and *Cleomades*, all written by Adenez, king at arms to Henry, Duke of Brabant, in the 13th century, &c. &c.

|| The heralds in early times were always men of rank.—*Œuvres de Fauchet*, 1610, rev. f. 517.

§ Montf. *Biblioth. Manuscript*. p. 688*, letter E, tom. i.; p. 954, letter B, tom. ii.; and p. 1329, letter C, same volume.

* This is the reference of the Abbé Rive; but I have been unable, on inspection, to discover the article. The second is stated by Montfaucon to be in the Colbertine Collection, and the last in that of the President de Mesme.

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pose of decorating this edition, I consider myself greatly indebted ; and it gives me pleasure to bear testimony to the manner, equally spirited and faithful, in which the artist has executed these Engravings, which I am confident the possessors of this work will agree with me in considering as accompaniments infinitely more elegant and appropriate to a "Romance of Chivalry," than the rude and shapeless wood-cuts given in Redborne's edition. After frequent inquiries, I am unable to obtain tidings of any other MSS. of this romance in the kingdom ; at least the two grand magazines of this species of wealth, the British Museum and the Bodleian Library, do not possess any.

The MS. Romance particularized by the Abbé Rive, bears the name of the *Petit Artus de Bretagne*, and has been, as he says, confounded with that called *Le Grand Artus*, by Lenglet*, Quadrio†, de Bure‡, and Osmont§. The Abbé's usual accuracy appears here to have deserted him, since I cannot find that either Lenglet, de Bure, or Osmont, have fallen into the error attributed to them ; they all expressly distinguish the *Artus de Bretagne* (by the Abbé designated as the *Petit Artus*) from the *Grand Artus*, or the possessor of *The Round Table*. It is true, however, that Quadrio has mistaken them for one and the same person.

The first printed edition in the French language bears date in the year 1493, and was in the library of the Duc de la Valliere, although Lenglet du Fresnoy, Quadrio, de Bure, Osmont, and Tressan, have considered that of 1502 as the earliest. These writers have also omitted all notice of the 3d edition in 1536.

The fourth, and I believe the last, was printed in 1584. This latter, though not common, is the least difficult to be obtained.

Of the English translation we have notices of only three editions : the first, according to Ames, was printed by Robert Copland,

* *La Bibliothèque des Romans*, tom. ii. p. 175.

† Quadrio, tom. iv. p. 491.

‡ De Bure, *Bibliogr. Instr.*, tom. iv. p. 131.

§ Osmont, tom. i. p. 55.

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without date; but which Herbert, from the title page, conjectures *not* to have been the first: he confesses he had not seen the book. The next was printed by Robert Redborne, from which the present is reprinted*. Warton speaks of one printed as late as 1609; but this, from the way he mentions it, it is evident he had not met with †.

It only remains to say, that in this reprint, (which has been executed with very great care,) the precise language and even orthography of Redborne's edition have been preserved, except in a very few instances, where either from the carelessness of the translator, or the error of the printer, the passage was unintelligible: on such occasions, both the MS. in the Editor's possession, and that of Lord Thurlow, together with the printed French edition, have been referred to for the elucidation of the text. There appears occasionally some confusion in the names of the persons introduced: for instance, in the first chapter of the translation the name of the Earl of Leycester is substituted for that of Lancaster, which occurs in the French original, and in another part of this translation: but as the Editor professed to give an exact reprint, and as no historical fact would suffer from the inaccuracy, he did not deem it necessary to make the alteration.

Of this reprint only 200 copies are taken off; viz. 175 on small, and 25 on large paper.

E. V. U.

January, 1814.

* The copy above mentioned was purchased at the sale of the Duke of Roxburghe's library, and was in many respects imperfect: on application, however, to Earl Spencer, that nobleman readily afforded the Editor an opportunity of supplying the *lacunæ*, by a transcript from his own fine and perfect copy.

† See Ritson's *Observations on the History of English Poetry*, p. 46. This romance appears to have become popular in England at an early period, probably through the medium of this translation; hence—

“Hannibal and Pompey, with Tristram, Gallahad, Orckney.”

(Stanyhurst's *Poems*, 1583, p. 104,) where the name of the last-mentioned knight is evidently taken from this work.

THE PROLOGE.

HERE FOLOWETH

THE TRANSLATOUR'S PROLOGUE.

FOR as moche as it is delectable to all humayne nature to rede and to here these auncient noble hystories of the chyualrous feates and marcyall prowesses of the vycoryous knyghtes of tymes paste, whose tryumphaut dedes, yf wrytynge were not, sholde be had clene oute of remembraunce: and also bycause that ydelnesse is reputed to be the moder of al vices; wherfore somewhat in eschewynge therof, and in the waye of lowli erudycyon and learnynge, I John Bourghchere, knyght, lorde Berners, haue enterprysed to translate out of Frensshe in to our maternal tongue, a noble hystory, makynge mencyon of the famous dedes of the ryght valyaunt knyght Arthur, sonne and heyre to the noble duke of Brytayne; and of the fayre lady Florence, doughter and heyre to the myghty Emendus, kyng of the noble realme of Soroloys; and of the grete trouble that they endured, or they attayned to the perfourmaunce of theyr vertuous amorous desyers: for, fyrste, they ouercame many harde & straūge aduentures, the whiche, as to our humayne reason, sholde seme to be incredible. Wherfore, after that I had begon this sayd processe, I haue determined to haue left and gyuen vp my laboure, for I thoughte it sholde haue be reputed but a folye in me to translate be seming suche a fayned mater, wherin semeth to be so many vnpossybyltyes: how be it than I called agayne to my remembraūce, that I had redde and seen many a sondrye

volume of dyuerse noble hystories, wherin were containd the redoubted dedes of the auneynt inuynsyble conquerours, & of other ryght famous knightes, who acheued many a straunge and wonderfull aduenture, the whyche, by playne letter as to our vnderstandynge, sholde seme in a maner to be supernaturall; wherfore I thought that this present treatyse myght as well be reputed for trouthe as some of those: and also I doubted not but that the first auctour of this boke deuysed it not with out some maner of trouthe or vertuous entent: the whiche consyderacyons, and other, gaue me agayne audacyte to contynue forth my fyrste purpose tyll I had fynysshed this sayd boke; not presumynge that I haue reduced it in to fresshe ornat polysshed Englysshe, for I knowe my selfe insufficyent in the facondyous arte of rethoryke, nor also I am but a lerner of the language of Frensshe: how be it, I truste my symple reason hath ledde me to the vnderstandinge of the true sentence of the mater, accordinge to the whiche I haue folowed as nere as I coude, desyrynge all the reders and herers therof to take this my rude trāslacion in gre; and yf ony faute be, to laye it to myn vnconnyng and derke ingnoraūce, and to mynysshe, adde, or augmēt, as they shall fynde cause requysyte; and in theyr so doyng, I shall praye to God that, after this vayne and transytory lyfe, he may brynge them vnto the perdurable joye of heuen. Amen.

Thus endeth the translatours prologue.

T A B U L A.

HERE AFTER FOLOWETH THE TABLE OF THYS PRESENT
HYSTORIE.

CAP. I.

PAGE

THE fyrste chapyter maketh mencyon of the byrth of the noble
knyght Arthur, sonne and heyre to the Duke of Brytayne..... 1

CAP. II.

How the Duke of Brytayne delyuered his sonne Arthur to the gouer-
naunce of a prudent knyghte named syr Gouvernar, who dyd ensigne
him in all goodlye maners & dedes of armes, so that afterwarde
there was non lyke vnto him..... 2

CAP. III.

How Arthur founde in the forest a noble lady w^tout socour, and w^t
her a fayre yonge mayde, her doughter, named Jehannet, before a
lytle lodge, the whyche they had made of y^e braunches of the trees;
and how that Arthur was amorus of the sayd Jehannet..... 4

CAP. IV.

Howe Arthur caused to be delyuered to Jehannet, & her moder, y^e
reuenues y^t belonged to the stang or ponde of the forest, wherby
there stode a fayre goodly place of pleasure; and afterward Arthur
didde often tymes resorte thyder to passe the tyme with them..... 7

CAP. V.

How within viii. dayes after, Arthur and Gouvernar wente to the stange
to se the ladye, and Jehannet her doughter..... 9

CAP. VI.

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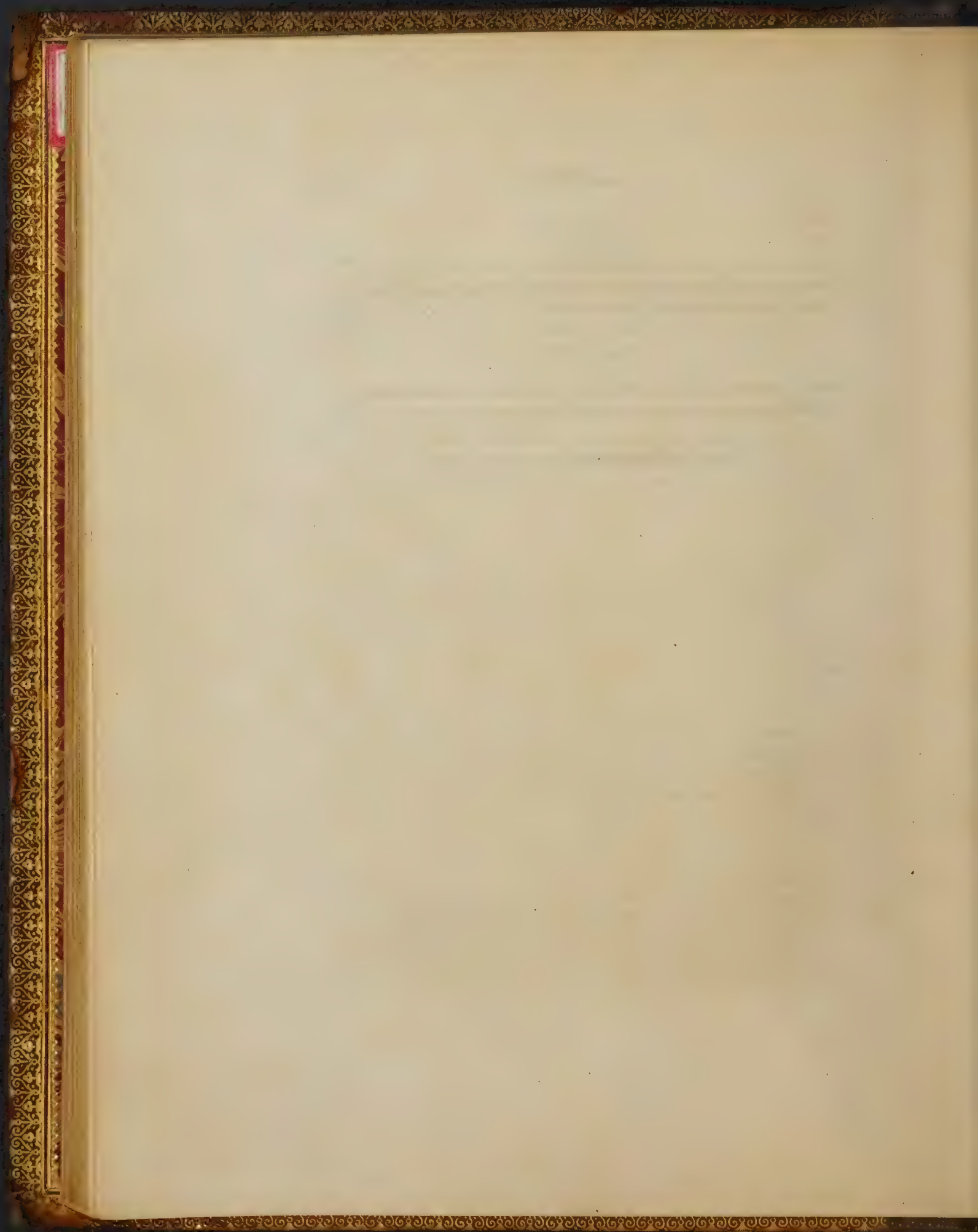
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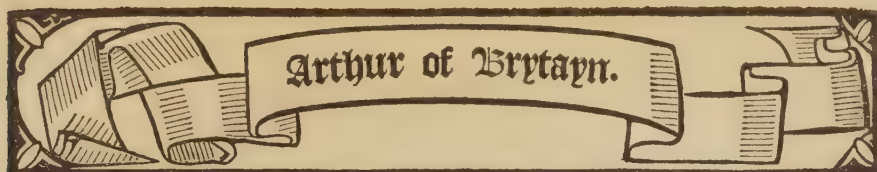
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¶ The hystory of the moost noble and valyaunt knyght Arthur
of lytell brytayne, translated out of frensshe in to englushe by the
noble Johan Bourghcher knyght lorde Barners, newly Imprinted.





Thystory
OF
ARTHUR OF LYTLE BRYTAYNE.

CAPITULO I.

THE FYRSTE CHAPYTER MAKETH MENCYON OF THE BYRTH OF
THE NOBLE KNYGHT ARTHUR SONNE AND HEYRE TO THE
DUKE OF BRYTAYNE.

AFTER the death of good kynge Arthur who was ryght noble and gentyll, specyally in cherysshynge and enhaunsynge of nobylnesse, and mayntaynyng of the chyualrous knyghtes of the worlde, as was Gawyn and Lancelotte and many other noble knyghtes as it is more plainly conteyned in dyuers auntyent cronycles: it is of trouth that in tho dayes in Brytayne there was a duke ryghte prudente & aboue all other ryghte vertuous, ryche and puyssaunte bothe of hauyour and frendes, who was come and extraughte of the noble hygh lygnage of the valyaūt knyght Laūcelot du lake, who was in his dayes of right hyghe & noble prowesse as it is more at large comprised in the bokes makynge mencyon of his chyualrye. This Duke had to name Johan, and was so endued wyth sapyence y^t the kynge who as than gouerned all Fraunce, loued and honoured hym aboue all other, in soo moche it was sayde where so euer he wente, beholde yonder is the wyse man of Britaine; he was sworne of the kynges preuye and streayte

counsayle so that the kynge was onely gouerned by his noble aduise because of the gret trouthe and stedfastnesse y^t was euer foude in hym. This duke hadd a ryghte noble lady to his wyfe of good & holy life who was doughter to the erle of Leycester in Englande, & they loued togyder ryght feruently by cordyall loue al theyr lyfe, and in accomplyshing betwene them the werkes of maryage ordeyned by nature, fynallye it pleased the good Lorde to sende theym a fayre sonne, who in the remembraunce of good kyng Arthur and of his hye renowne, was named Arthur. This chylde was goodly & of ful greate beaute: for afterward he grew to be the mooste fayre creature that than was founde in all Crystendome, and the duke & duches loued hym so well that they entended to no thyng but all onely to the prouffyte of theyr chylde, and specyally to enhaunce his honour and rychesse.

CAP. II.

HOW THE DUKE OF BRYTAYNE DELYUERED HIS SONNE ARTHUR TO THE GOUERNAUNCE OF A PRUDENT KNYGHTE NAMED SYR GOUERNAR WHO DYD ENSIGNE HIM IN ALL GOODLYE MANERS & DEDES OF ARMES, SO THAT AFTERWARDE THERE WAS NON LYKE VNTO HIM.

AND whā this chyld Arthur was nyne yere of age than the Duke his fader delyuered hym to be kepte vnder the gouernaunce of a noble & a gentyl mayster named Gouvernar, who was ryght prudent, puyssaūt & hardy, vertuous & vygorous of bodye & well proued, who amonge other thynges dydde teach this noble chylde Arthur the play of the chesse & tables so y^t non was in cōninge lyke vnto him. And whā he was of .xx. yere than his mayster taught hym the manere of skyrmyshe, so that wⁱⁿ a lytle season ther was none able to be cōpared w^t hym. Thus amended this chylde frome daye to daye & grew so goodly y^t in al the worlde there was none

sene lyke him, nether so fayre, so gracyous ne so courteyse, in so muche y^t the kynge of Fraunce desyred oftētymes y^t he sholde haue be noryshed & brought vp wyth his one chyldren. How be it y^e duchesse his moder coude in no wyse suffer it, ne scant to let him be oute of her presence neuer a day, she loued him so entierly. So longe thys chyld soiourned w^t his moder y^t it was gretlye noyful to his hert, in so moche that therby he became ryght pensyfe & sore troubled in his mind. So that Gouvernar hys mayster demaunded of hī what was the cause of his sorowe. In good fayth mayster sayd Arthur, this long soiorning and abyding at home greatly noyeth me, for I wolde gladly go and play me in yōder fayre forest, and to hunt and chase after a grete harte; for it hath ben now a grete season sythe I went ony where forth. Sertaynly sayde Gouvernar, fayre Arthur it pleaseth me ryght wel your noble mīd. There, go to my lord your fader and desyre hys lycēce that ye may go chase in y^e forest. Than Arthur went forth to y^e duk his fader and demaunded of hym lycence. Whā the duke hard this tydyng and wyl of his son, he had grete ioy & ryght swete dyd graūte hym his request & commaunded & desyred Gouvernar that he shold take good hede to hym & not suffre hym to renne ne to folowe to faste after his dysport. Gouvernar answered that he wolde take good hede to him. Than Arthur caused y^e hūters to be warned & to make redy his greyhōudes, houndes & other raches for he wolde go the nexte daye be tymes to chase in the forest. And the nexte mornyng Arthur & Gouvernar mōūted on theyr horses w^t grete ioye & .x. other gentylmen to kepe them company. And Arthur was mounted on a grete courser, his hat hangyng on his backe by a lace of sylke, his bonet on his head, & the hunters wente before ledyng his greyhoundes and houndes. Thus they ryde forthe toward the forest in grete ioye.

CAP. III.

HOW ARTHUR FOUNDE IN THE FOREST A NOBLE LADY W^TOUT
SOCOUR, AND W^T HER A FAYRE YONGE MAYDE HER DOUGHTER,
NAMED JEHANNET, BEFORE A LYTLE LODGE THE WHYCHE
THEY HAD MADE OF Y^E BRAUNCHES OF THE TREES, AND HOW
THAT ARTHUR WAS AMORUS OF THE SAYD JEHANNET.

IN this tyme there was in the realme of desert a knyght of grete power and right riche of hauiour and frendes, and he was Lord of a castell called the Toure. This knyght was named Vyciers and was of such vertue that he doutyd nothi^{ng} .x. knyghtes armed, and was of so vali^{ant} corage that sin the time that he coude fyrst beare armes he was neuer but there as he knew where as the fayte of armes were occupied, and employed h^{is}elfe euer in iustes and tornayes and in dedes of armes and dyd so to be alowed y^t there was no spek^{ing} of him but that he was the noblest knight of the world: but finally he led so his life that he sp^{ed}ed and wasted his goodes so largely to th^et^et to get hym laude and prayse, that at the end he became therby very pore, and th^a was fayne to sell and to make shyfte of all y^t he had both of his owne & of the good lady his wyfe, and so dyed in grete pouerte. And whan he was buryed suche persones as he was detter vnto, toke all the londes & goodes that perteyned other to hym or to the lady his wyfe, so y^t there by the good lady his wife fledde & departed pryuely out of y^t couⁿtrey, so y^t non of her frendes wyste where she was become: for she thoughte she hadde rather to lyue poorely in a straunge countrye ferre fro her fr^edes & aqueyntaunce th^a to endure pouerte in her owne countrye where she had ben nobly broughte vp in before. So this lady went & her doughter with her, who was of the age of .xiiii. yea^re ryght beautefull, how be it she was porely arayed, & had to name Jehannet. And they trauayled so l^oge by they^r iorneyes y^t by aduenture they came in to the forest where Arthur & Gouvernar were vsed to chase & to hunte. And in a desolate

place of the forest ferre from any hye way ther these two ladyes dyd reste them and made theym a lodge to abyde in of boughes and of suche thinges as they coude gette. Thus they contynued the space of a moneth. And this lady went eueri day right porely to the nexte vylage for to gete suche thinges as she & her doughter neded. And so it fortun-ed y^t the same day y^t Arthur & Gouvernar departed fro the courte of his fader and was entred into the sayde foreste, anone his houndes had founde a grete harte. And a noble knyghte y^t was in his cōpany named the lorde Olyuer of Iryac folowed after this harte on a gret courser & all the other hūters after hym. And this yonge Arthur began to folowe after, how be it Gouvernar toke hede y^t he sholde not folowe to faste, so y^t this sayde lorde Olyuer and all other were past forth by hym & were gon so ferre into the thicke of y^e foreste, y^t Arthur & Gouvernar had clene loste both sight and heringe of thē and of theyr hōūdes. And so by ges they folowed fayre and esyly after : so lōg they folowed y^t by aduenture they came to the same place where as the lodge was made for the lady and her doughter, who were bothe the same tyme syttyng wythout the lodge dore. And as soone as Arthur sawe them he lyghted downe of his hors and Gouvernar w^t hym. And whā this lady sawe Arthur she was gretly abashed, for she thought well y^t he sholde be some grete man, & therew^t she rose and Arthur right swetely saluted her. And the lady in like wise agayne to him. And at y^t tyme it was aboute thre of the clocke. And whan the ladye sawe Arthur & Gouvernar dyscende from theyr horses, she remembred the state of her fader & of other gētilmen y^t she had seene before in her owne countree where as she had be norysshed vp in, wherof her herte was gretely ashamed & troubled. Than Arthur toke her by the hande & her moder also & set them downe all togyder. Than Arthur demaūded of the yonge-mayde & sayd, Fayre swete damoyzell what is your name? As our Lord helpe me syr I am called Jehannet; Jehānet good loue, where were ye borne? Certayne syr I was not born in this cōūtre. Than her moder sayd, Syr truely my doughter sayth sothe, for truely she was borne in the lōd of desarte in a castel called the Tour. Truly sayd Arthur, to whome was she

doughter? As God helpe me syr to a knyght right stronge & puyssaūt, who in his tyme loued euer dedes of armes & was acquēted w^t many noble men. How be it his fortune was such or he dyed y^t he lost away & wasted both his londes and goodes and myne that was his poore wyfe, and were broughte so ferre vnder, that lytell or nothing was left vs. And after his death such persones as he owed ony thyng to, and peradventure some other y^t he owed nothing to, they were thā so importune on me that I was fayne to sel al y^t I had. And whan I saw that I was so ferre broughte vnder & y^t I had nothyng lefte me wherby to lyue, the occasion therof caused me to steale awaye by nyght, for I thought I had leuer go lyke a poore woman a beggyng in a straunge countre thā there where I was lady and gouernour. And therwith ryght pyteously she wept and sayd, A gentyll knyghte now am I come in to this cōtre alonely accompanied w^t this yōg mayde my dere doughter, who was wōt be brought vp in fayre places and ryche halles and chambres, & to lye in the bed incorteyned wyth sylke. And nowe it behoueth her to lye on the mosse in this lodge couered wyth grene boughes. Than Arthur answered and sayde, A fayre lady, why dide not ye requyre youre frendes to helpe and socour you in your necessite, at leste to gyue you mete & drynke & clothing? In my mīd that had be more honorable for you thā thus desolate to come in to this straūge cōtrye. As God helpe me syr, sayd this lady, pore folkes hath but fewe frendes: howe be it I ought to haue many, but betwene the riche & the poore there wanteth frendes, for the ryche maketh his frendes of his money & the pore is euer put out in euery place. And as to me sorowfull creature who hath bene a grete lady & moche honoured & haue had moche peōple vnder my obeysaūce, I thoughte grete shame to requyre ony creature in my owne cūtre to helpe or soccoure me; and specyally for this yonge mayde my doughter, she is come of goodly lygnage. Alas as for me I am olde, and alwayes she hath serued me ryghte well, & now she is lyke w^t me to lese her tyme; & therw^t she began agayne to wepe. And whan Jehānet sawe her moder so wepe she coude not abstayne her selfe from wepyng tenderly. And whan Arthur sawe them so full of

sorowe, he had grete pyte, and sayd to the lady: My right dere lady wepe ye no more, but sette youre harte in rest, for fro hēsforth I wyll be in the stede of youre olde lorde, & in all good honoure to loue & cherish you to the best of my power. And all this whyle Jehānet made styll grete lamentaciō. So there Arthur toke the yonge mayde in his armes, & ryght swetely sayd: My right dere ladye & loue, abandon youre herte to ioye and leue this sorowe, for as God be my socoure I shall cause you haue more honoure & welth than as yet euer came to you, for I am and shal be your owne good louer and wyll take you in to my handes to delyuer you fro all pouertye, faythfully assuryng you to kepe the honour of you & of youre bodye as moche as youre owne propre broder wolde or myght do.

CAP. IV.

HOWE ARTHUR CAUSED TO BE DELYUERED TO JEHANNET & HER MODER Y^e REUENUES Y^t BELONGED TO THE STANG OR PONDE OF THE FOREST WHERBY THERE STODE A FAYRE GOODLY PLACE OF PLEASURE, AND AFTERWARD ARTHUR DIDDE OFTEN TYMES RESORTE THYDER TO PASSE THE TYME WITH THEM.

IN this season y^t Arthur had this cōmuncaciō w^t these ladyes, ther came to thē the mayster forester named Pyere who was also receyuer of the reuenues of the forest, & he had al y^t day soughte his mayster Arthur; & by aduenture there he fōūd him talking w^t these ladyes. And incōtynent y^t Arthur sawe hī he called hym by his name and demaundyd of hī yf he had receyued at y^t mawdeleyne tyde y^e reuenues of the forest; and Piers answered and said, Syr I haue alredy at your cōmaūdement to the some of .fyue .C. pounde. Well, quod Arthur, I cōmaūde the incontynente to delyuer it to this lady & to her doughter: also the maner place pertayn-

ing to the stang of this forest wherein thou hast dwelt to this tyme. It was so that in this stāge or water the wylde beastes of the foreste dyd euer thyder resorte to drynke, and joynynge to this water there were houses and maners the which the duke had gyuen to Arthur his son to playe hī in the forest, and this Pyers was keper thereof to Arthurs behoue. Than sayde Arthur to Pyers, I delyuer to y^u these .ii. ladyes : and I charge the y^t truly y^u kepe & honour them and brig them to my maner, and to deliuer to them such as is apertenaūte to so goodly ladyes as they be, and as such a man as I am haue taken into my hādes & kepyng. Therefore kepe thē well & truely. For, by the fayth y^t I owe to my lord my fader, yf I knowe y^t y^u entende or ymagen agaynst this lady or her doughter any dyspleasure, I shall cause the to suffre foule death. And I warne the loke y^t they lacke no thyng. Syr, sayd Pyers, I trust I shall so demeane me, y^t both you & they shall be w^t me contente. And so whā Arthur had ben there a grete season, he toke his leue there of this lady and of her doughter. So Pyers dyd conduyte them to the said maner & bought for them abyementes & jewelles, mete and drynke of the best y^t coude be gotten, & all other thynges y^t was cōuenyent for noble ladys to haue : and garnysshed euery offyce in y^e house w^t plate of syluer & w^t all other necessary thynges. And whan Arthur and Gouvernar wer departed frō these ladyes, they rode after the tracke of syr Olyuer of Iryac and his companye, and at the laste they mete togyder ferre in the forest in a grete depe valey where as syr Olyuer hadde kyllled thre grete hartes, and was brekyng of them. And therewith Arthur came to hym & laughed ryght swetely. Than resorted other of the hunters fro all partyes. And so there Arthur commaunded a seruaunt belongynge to the sayd Pyers to take one of these hartes & to bere it fro him to the sayd lady and to her doughter. And the seconde Arthur dyd gyue to an abbote that was come to theym by aduenture. And the thirde he commaunded that it sholde be conueyed to the duke his fader, who hadde grete ioye therof.

CAP. V.

HOW WITHIN VIII. DAYES AFTER, ARTHUR AND GOUERNAR WENTE
TO THE STANGE TO SE THE LADYE AND JEHANNET HER
DOUGHTER.

THE eyght daye after that Arthur was come fro the foreste he rose erly in a fayre morninge, and sayd to Gouvernar: Frende, lette vs go leape vppon our horses and goo se oure damoyzell in the forest, we two alone. Gladly, syr, sayd Gouvernar. So Arthur toke a sparhawke on his honde, and Gouvernar a gerfawcon. And Arthur aparayled hym selfe all in grene silke, and his hatte auayled with a fresshe chaplet of floures on his heade. And they rode so longe that by the sonne rysynge they came to the stang, and fouñd the lady and Jehannet ready aparayled ryght nobly: for Pyers, the forester, had purueyed them of all thinges necessarye to suche ladyes. And as than Jehannet had dronken good wynes and taken her sustenance of good metes, and had forgotē all her sorowe; wherby her beaute was newly renewed. And whan Arthur sawe her, she pleased hym moche better thā she dyd whan he sawe her fyrst. And so toke her by the fayre hande and sette them downe togyder a parte. And in the meane seasō the lady her moder and Gouvernar were talkynge togyder. And the mornynge was very fayre & clere, and the earth all bedewed wyth clere syluer droppes, and the byrddes sange melodiously on euery braunche; so that these ii. yonge lusty louers gretly reioysed, and had great myrthe in theyr hartes bicause of the swete season, as it was metely for suche yonge people to playe & to laughe. And they loued togyder with good herte without thinkinge of vylany or shame eche to other. Than Arthur sayd to her al laughyng: My swete damoyzell haue ye ony maner of louer? And halfe smilig and beholdynge Arthur ryghte swetely, she answered: By the fayth that I owe to you my owen dere lorde, I haue one ryghte fayre and gracyous. And where is he my swete Jehannet? By my

fayth, syr, he is of a coūtre wherof he is lorde. And, fayre loue, howe is he called? Syr, be you not dyspleased, this that I haue sayde is suffycient at this presente time. How be it, syr, I wolde ye knew that king Arthur was a noble knyght and of grete vertu, and, syr, I wolde my loue were so good yf he be not better all redy. But one thīg, syr, I assure you, he resembleth more to you than to ony other vnder the sonne lyuyng, bothe goynge, and in comynge of bodye and all other thynges that one persone may be lykened to an other. My owne swete and fayre damoyzell, sayd Arthur, I wolde fayne se hym. And by the fayth that ye ow to me, if it be to you no vylony, I praye you shewe hym to me, & I promyse you faythfully, I shall loue & cherysse hym ryght derely; and for the loue of you, yf y^t he wyll, he shal be one of my house, yf he be no greater of lygnage ne of rychesse than I am. My right dere lorde, sayd this damoyssel hūbly, I thanke you: howe be it, he is no greater gentylman than ye be, but he thynketh well to haue as grete honour and frendes as ye haue; but as now ye may not se him, but it may well be that here after ye shall haue knowlege of hym.

And soo thus they comoned togyder of manye thynges tyll it was tyme that Arthur sholde retorne to the courte, for as than it was aboute pryde. Than Arthur toke his leue of the lady and of Jehannet. And so he and Gouernar mounted on theyr horses and rode forth, alwayes deuysyng of the maner of this damoyzell Jehannet. And at the last Arthur sayd: Mayster howe saye you? by the swetnesse of our damoyzell and of the frenes of her herte, and how sagely & graciously she answereth to euerye demaunde, remembryng also her gentyll maner & noble countenaunce, her beawtefull facyon of body and of vysage: as God helpe me, mayster, all these thynges, and manye other that seameth of vertue to be in her, causeth that I loue her hyrtely. Syr, sayde Gouernar, as God helpe me, all that ye saye is of trouth: how be it, myne owne dere lorde, take good hede to your honour, and remembre how grete a lorde ye be, both of lygnage, honoure, and of frendes; and thinke how that she is but a poore gentylwoman as to your knowlege. And if ye do her ony vylony

to her body, as in takynge from her that he can not render agayne, syr, it were to you a grete synne, and ye ought therein to be more blamed than a nother meane persone. Mayster, sayd Arthur, I praye to God neuer to helpe me yf I thynke to go aboute to dysshonoure her, but I wyll loue her & kepe her honoure faythfully, in lyke case as she were myne owen proper sister, without euer desyringe onye velany to her body. So they rode forthe talkyng til they came to the courte, and than went to dynere, for it was by that time nere vpon two of the clocke.

CAP. VI.

HOW THAT THE DUKE AND DUCHESSE TOKE COUNSELL TO MARY
THEYR SONE ARTHUR, AND HOW THEY SENT THEYR STEW-
ARDE TO THE LADY LUKE OF OSTRIGE FOR TO DEMAUNDE
HER DOUGHTER FOR ARTHUR.

IN this wyse Arthur sojourned a great longe space, so y^t there was no weke but that twyse or thrise he and Gouvernar wolde ryde to the stange without any other cōpany. And it fortunied one day he taried there lenger thā he was acostumed to do, wherfore he was sought all aboute, by the cōmaundement of the duke his father: how be it, no tydinges coude be herde of hym but that he & Gouvernar were gone togider to sporte them, but no man wyste whyther. And than the duchesse sayd to the duke, Syr, I wote not what meaneth that our soone thus goth forth so pryuely every day, & no man can tell whyther, for he taketh none with him but Gouvernar; veraylye, I doubte me of our chylde, least that he sholde set his herte & loue on some persō wherby we shold haue any velony: syr, he is now of yeres sufficient to perceiue & to know the fayte perteyning to loue, wherfore I wolde he were nobly married, for it is tyme, he is .xxii. yeres of age. Madame,

quod the duke, ye haue ryght wysely sayd; and I acorde well thereto; but to whome thinke ye best it were to giue him in mariage? Syr, sayd the ladye, in my minde it were wel doone that we should demaūde the fayre Perron of Ostryge; & I trust my lady Luke, her moder, wyl be therof right glad. Veryly, madame, sayd the duke, I haue harde saye that this lady Perron hath not wyselye demeaned her selfe, but hath had greate blame for her unwyse kepyng company w^t a knight of her countrey; and I wolde for no good y^t we should demaunde such a person as hath deserued blame. A syr! sayd the lady, beleue not ye the reportes of them that lusteth to say yl, for, as God helpe me, she is slaundred wrongfully: for I am sure there is not a better maide lyuyng: wherfore they are in greate sin that reporteth otherwyse of her. Dame, sayd the duke, yf it be so, I am right ioyfull: than let vs send thyder in al hast. Than was called to them syr Olyuer y^t was seneshall. And the duke sayde to hym: Syr Olyuer, I wyll ye go to Ostryge, to my ladye Luke, & desyre of her, in my behalfe, Perron her doughter to be giuē in matrimony to Arthur my sone. Thā syr Olyuer prepayred him to ride forthe, and .x. other knightes in his company, and so departed and rode forth so longe, that the Wednesdaye after Mawdeleyn-tyde they came to Ostryge. And whan syr Olyuer was in the great hall, where as the lady Luke was acompanyed with many great barons, ladyes, and damoysels, he dyd right reuerently salute her and all the other lordes and barons, as a messenger sent fro the duke & duchesse of Britayne. And this lady Luke right honourablye dyd receyue hym and all hys company, and demaunded what was the cause and the occasyon of their comynge.

CAP. VII.

HOW THE SENESSHALL DEMAUNDED THE DAUGHTER OF OSTRYGE
FOR ARTHUR OF BRYTAYNE, THE WHICH REQUEST WITH GREAT
JOY WAS GRAUNTED HYM.

THAN syr Olyuer began hys proposicion, & sayde : Righte hye and myghty prynces ! my lorde and ladye of Brytayne hath sēd vs hither to publishe vnto you theyr ententes, for they are ryght desyrous to haue loue and affinitie with you, as it well appereth, for they haue harde suche brute & fame of my lady Perrō your doughter. Wherfore thei haue sent me hither to your presēce, to requyre you, in theyr behalfe, to gyue your doughter Perron in mariage to Arthur theyr sone, who is ryght gentyl, noble, & valiaunt. Madame, this is the effecte of our request. In the name of God, sayde the lady Luke, humbly I thāke the duke your lorde, y^t it wyl please him to haue wyth vs acquentaunce, wherof I haue right great joye. And with a good hert I gyue freely to him my doughter Perron to be all holly at his comaūdemēt. Madame, sayd Oliuer, this dede ought greatly to be thanked ; and how say you, fayre lady Perron, do you acorde to this mariage ? Syr, sayd Perron, I shall euer fulfyl the pleasure of my lady my moder. Certaynly, fayre lady, than doo you wysely ; for I ensure you ye shall be coupled to him y^t is both fayre and goodly. Than this lady Luke & her doughter did giue to syr Oliuer & to hys companye manye noble jewels, & other thinges. And theyr apoyntment was to be at Nautes within .viii. dayes of the middell of the next August.

CAP. VIII.

HOW Y^t ARTHUR WAS SORE DYSPLEASED FOR Y^t HIS FATHER WOULD
MARY HIM TO Y^e DOUGHTER OF OSTRYGE, BYCAUSE IT WAS
SAYDE SHE WAS OF YLL GOVERNAUNCE.

THAN the senesshal toke leue of the lady Luke and of the fayre Perron, and retorned into Brytayne. At whiche tyme he founde the duke than risen fro diner and the duchesse with hī. And Arthur and Gouvernar were playing at the chesse, & as sone as the duke saw syr Oliuer he made him good chere: and the knight right humblye saluted them, and thanked them greatly for the greate loue and gyftes that the Duchesse of Ostrige had done to him for their sakes, and shewed them how the lady Luke wolde be at Nauntes, and bring with her Perron redy aperayled, to be giuen to Arthur aboute the middell of August next ensuyng. And whā Arthur herde that his fader wolde mary him, he stepped forth & left his playe and sayd: What is y^t, right dere fader, wyll ye marie me? Ye, fayre sone, sayde the duke, right nobly. And good fader, vnto whom wyll ye gyue me? Fayre sone, vnto the gentil Perron of Ostryge. What syr! as it is noysed she hath trespassed w^t a nother knight; set ye so little by me that ye wyll now gyue me Perrō, who is of yl name and fame? Certainly it is not your worshyp ne honour so to do, nor to none of my frendes: therefore, in no maner of wyse I wyl take her. Fayre sone, sayde his moder, be not displesed, ne beleue no euil reportes y^t is sayd by this ladi: it is great sin to say such thinges as cannot be proued, for I am in certayne that she is a clene mayden. And therefore we wil that ye shal haue her, or els ye shal gretly dysplease my lorde your father, & me also. Wel, madame, said Arthur, sith that it behoueth me to take her, & that it is your pleasure y^t I so do, I am content: how be it, yf she be of suche condicions as is sayd of her, I shal neuer loue her. Than sayd

Gouernar to the duke, Syr, ye wyl that Arthur shall haue this damoisell; neuerthelesse, pleaseth you syr to know, that if this case be found true, thā let Arthur leue and forsake her. And yf that she dyd neuer suche trespas, thā let Arthur kepe her as he ought to doo hys wyfe. But how shall thys be knowen? sayd the duke, for where as wysedome is, suche thinges are lightly done so couertly, that it is harde to know. Syr, sayd Gouernar, let it be enquiryed wysely of such as to presume should know of the matter. Also let the damoyzell her self be wysely examyned, & yf she be good she wyl kepe her selfe; yf she be otherwyse, perauenture it will be espied. I am content with this, sayd Arthur. And for that time they left theyr cominēg of that matter. Than the duke sent out his cōmaūdementes to all his barons, knightes, & damoyssels, that they sholde be al redy at Nautes bi the middes of August, for thā he wolde kepe open courte, and make Arthur his sone, knight, and marye hym to the fayre Perron of Ostryge. The duke also dyd write to the Erle of Bloys, broder germayne to the duchesse his wyfe, and also sent for the Erle of Aniou, who was nere of kinne to the duke, and also to the Archebyssshop of Tours, desyringe them to be at Nautes at the sayd daye.

CAP. IX.

HOW THAT ARTHUR WENTE TO SE JEHANNET, AND DECLARED TO HER HOW Y^e DUKE HIS FATHER SHOULD MARY HIM, WHEREOF HE WAS SORE DYSPLEASED FOR Y^e LOUE OF HER.

THAN Arthur & Gouernar toke their horses & rode to the stāge in the forest, where as they founde Jehannet & her moder, who made great joy & feest; and Jehānet behelde Arthur, who was as than right pale for dyspleasure, & demaūded of him what was the cause of his displeasure. Certaynly, my loue, said Arthur, greater displeasure coulde neuer haue fallen. For my lorde my father wil now mary me, the which I forthinke w^t al mi herte, be

cause of the loue y^t I haue to you, for I thinke verily ye wyl not be contēt therw^t; and your displeasure perseth myn herte. A min owne swete lord, sayd Jehānet, for Gods sake trouble not your selfe for no cause, for in certayne I am in like case fallen in a treatie to be maried. A good loue, sayd Arthur, I prai you to whome? Syr, so God helpe me, to him of whome I haue spoken to you of here before. Is y^t of a trouth, faire damoisel? quod Arthur; and I requyre you whā shal ye be maried? In trouth, the same propre day that ye shal be maryed. Now, fayre damoyssel, by the faith that ye owe to hī, I desyre you let me se hī. Syr, ye may not se hym as yet, but for certayne he shall be aperayled in y^e same clothyng & sute as ye shall be the day of your wedding. In the name of God, sayd Arthur, I haue of this great meruayle; for ye haue sayde here before to me that he is as great of lignage as I am, and as gretly endued wyth hauyour and frendes, and how y^t he resembleth to me in all pointes, and also howe that he hath a ryche & a puissaunt vnclē. I wote not whome I shold thinke, without ye meane al this by my self, for I know wel the Erle of Bloys is my vnclē by my moders side. Wel, sir, sayd Jehānet, nor I wyll not shew you at this present time. So thus they commined together of that and of other thīges, tyll finally Arthur tooke leue of her for that tyme, and retourned to the courte of his father. And thus dayly he rode to se this fayre daymoysel Jehannet, til it came to the next day before his wedding. And the Erle of Aniou and the Archebyssshop of Tours were come, and also the Erle of Blois, who brought with him Hector his son, who was a gentill and a fayre creture, & was extraught of the linage of Brytayne, & was cosin germayn to Arthur, & also of one age, for thei were borne bothe in one yeare. And as Arthur saw him he made him great ioy and feest, and al wayes kept companye togyder. And so there came fro all partes lordes, knightes, ladies, & damoyssels, by great flockes, for to go mete the ladi Perron of Ostryge. And than mounted the duke and al other barons & knightes to go lykewyse to encountre Perron, who was as than come within the space of halfe a lege, & brought with her a great cōpany of lordes, knightes, ladies, and damoyssels.

CAP. X.

HOW THAT ARTHUR & HECTOR HIS COSYN GERMAINE WERE
MADE KNIGHTES FOR THE LOUE OF ARTHUR, WHO THAN DID
ENSURE PERRON, DOUGHTER TO Y^e LADY LUKE OF OSTRIGE.
AND OF THE GREAT TORNAY THAT WAS THERE DONE AT
NAUNTES FOR THE LOUE OF ARTHUR.

AND whan all these noble people were assēbled together, the duke and duchesse and all other lordes made grēat ioye and feest at the metynge of thys lady Luke and Perron her doughter. And the duchesse toke her in her armes, and sayd : A ! myne owne swete doughter, ye be into this countrey right welcome ; and kissed her, oftentimes wepyng for joye, for she was so fayre a creature y^t the duchesse coulde not abstayne her self fro clypping & kissing her. And therew^t called to her Arthur, and sayd : Fayre sone Arthur, beholde here this fayre lady who is & shall be yours. Madame, sayd Arthur, wyll it please you to suffre her to moūt vpon her horse, & we shal speke of thys matter well ynoughe here after. So they went all to horse and rode forth to Nauntes. And there lordes, knightes, & other toke vp theyr lodginge in the citie, and some were harboured in the palais with the duke. And whan it came to the tyme to speke of the maryage, than Arthur sayde in open audyence : My lorde my father, and also my ladye my mother, ye wyll cause me here to take this damoyzell : and yet I knowe not what name or fame that she is of. How be it, syr, I say surely bothe to you, & also to you, my lady Luke, who is mother vnto her, that I take her agaynste my herte, bycause of the suspeccyons, noise, and yll renowmes, the whyche that I haue harde saye and reported of her. Neuerthelesse, it behoueth me to take her, to exchewe therby the displeasure of my lorde my fader, & of my lady my moder, & other of my frendes, for I perceiue wel it is theyr mindes. How be it, I say openly here to you all, yf y^t I finde such noyse as renneth on her to be of trouth, I ensure

you y^t whyle I lyue she shal neuer haue one good day with me in rest. A! my fayre sone, sayd the duchesse, what & ye finde her good & true, and that all such ill noyse as ye haue harde of her be vntrew and false. Well, madame, sayde Arthur, than shal I loue her as I ought to do my wyfe.

Than the duke called forth the archebyssshop of Nautes, and so caused Arthur to be there openly fiaūced to Perron, and on the next day to be maryed. Thā began great feest and ioy in the palays, and daūsyng of ladies & damoyselles, & frusshyng of speres, & bateryng of harneys w^t swerdes in euerye strete of the citie. Than the duke sayde, that who so euer wolde take the ordre of chilualry w^t his son Arthur the nexte daye, with a good wyll he wolde gyue them the ordre. Thā Arthur sayd to Hector his cosyn: Syr, I requyre you to morow take the ordre of knighthode with me, & fro hensforth let vs kepe cōpanye togider in iustes, & tornays, & in al other thinges as sworne bretherne. Fayre cosin, sayd Hector, I requyre you let vs go know the pleasure of my lord my father, whither that he wil agre to this or not. Ye say well, sayd Arthur. Than Arthur cā before the duke his fader and al other lordes, & helde his cosyn Hector by the hād, & sayd openly to the Erle of Bloys: My lorde, my vnclē, I requyre you let my cosyn Hector be made knight to morow w^t me, for we shal loue togider the better euer after. Certaynly, sayd the erle, fayre neuēw, Hector hath as yet to lytle londe to susteyne therwyth the noble ordre of knight-hode. And y^t he sayde, bycause he wold not y^t is sone shold be made knight so sone. Truly, syr, said Arthur, he hath richesse inough to be a knight, for as lōge as ye lyue he can not fayle. And though he fayle of you, yet God hath so prouided for him y^t after your dayes he shal be Erle of Blois. Ye, fayre neuēw, quod the erle, we may both be disceiued by that, for it may so fortune that I may lese all my right in the erledome of Bloys, & his also. Nor let not my sone Hector loke to be lord ouer me, for as lōge as I liue, one fote of the londe of the erledom of Bloys geteth he not. No, syr, saide Arthur, & tourned to Hector and said: Fayre cosin, it shold seme wel by the saying of my lorde your fader how that he is very pore. How be it, I desire you to be knight w^t me, & I

faithfullie promise you y^t I shall giue you as much lōde or mōre as my lorde your fadēr wil giue you, and I pray you fro hēsforth let vs be togider as cōpanions in horse, in abilimētes, in lāde, in house, & in euery thinge: and so I retayne you fro this presēt time forthward. As God help me, fayre sō, sayd the duke, who had hard what Arthur had sayd to Hector, I am wel cōtent that ye thus retaine Hector your cosin: also I requyre him that he wil be your cōpanion. And to the Erle of Bloys he said: Also, syr, I desyre you to giue licence to your son Hector, that he may be knight with his cosin Arthur. Thā the Erle of Bloys dyd laughe therat, and sayd to the duke: Syr, as God me helpe I am ryght wel contēte: but of one thing let him be sure, that as longe as I liue he shall neuer be the Erle of Bloys. Than Arthur sayde to hys cosyn Hector: Well, syr, we be yonge ynoughe, therefore we shall seke to get our lyuing, for I trust God shal help vs. Than he sayd to the duke his father: Syr, Gouvernar hath serued & norissed me vp swetelye; therefore I requyre you let me make him knight; and whan I may, I wyl do better to hym. Certaynly, fayre sonne, it pleaseth me right well. So than they were made knightes with great tryumphe: & there was made great joye & fest both with lordes and ladies, and a great tornay was there ordeyned for the loue of these new knightes. And whyle this triumphe and tornay endured, Arthur sayd to Hector: Fayre cosyn, come on with me, & we wil go se the most swete and gentyl damoyssel y^t euer ye saw. In the name of God, quod Hector, I am well content. And so Arthur, Hector, & Gouvernar mounted on theyr horses and rode forth to the manoyr of the stāge, where as they foūd Jehānet and her moder lening in a wyndow talkyng togyder; & whan they saw Arthur, they came to hym & made great ioie. And than Jehānet demaunded of Arthur: Syr, quod she, what gentyl man is this that ye haue brought with you? Fayre loue, sayd Arthur, he is sonne to the Erle of Bloys, and he is my cosyn germayne. In y^e name of God, sayd she, he is hyther welcome for your sake. Than Jehannet behelde well Arthur, and she perceyued by his cōte-naunce y^t he was troubled, therefore she desyred of hym to know what he eyllid. In good faith, gōd loue, this day haue I made a

dolorous journey, for I haue fyaunced a woman agaynst my wil, y^e whiche I sore repēt, bycause it is grefull to me to leue youre companye. Certayne, fayre loue Arthur, quod she, take no dyspleasure thoughe you haue fiaūced a lady: for certaynlye in the same propre houre that ye fyaunced your ladye, I was fyaunced to my loue. And my dere loue, quod Arthur, I requyre you, who is that, and where is he? By the fayth y^e I owe vnto you, syr, I knowe ful wel where he is. Wel, fayre lady, sayd Arthur, I pray you than shew him to me. Surely, syr, that wyll I not do as yet, but I promise you to shew hym to you within these thre dayes next commyng. And, syr, know you for certayne, that he resembleth to you both in comyng, in goinge, in hauioure, in frendes, gentylnes, in facion of body, and in al other thinges. In the name of God, sayd Arthur, I meruayle greatly, for by your wordes it shold appere y^e it were myself: for there cannot two persons be resembled togider but theyr must be som faute & difference. I beleue ye deuise these wordes for me: how be it, I am troubled agayne whā I thinke how ye saye that ye were fiaunced to day, and how that ye shall be maryed to morowe the same propre houre that I shal be wedded in. As God helpe me, syr, sayd Jehannet, it is of trouth he resembleth to you w^out faylyng of any poynte. Veryly, sayde Arthur, I cannot thinke whome it should be. And so they talked together so longe til it was tyme for Arthur to departe, for he doubted to be blamed of hys frendes.

So he toke leue of the ladyes and departed: & as they rode, Hector sayd to Arthur: Syr, vndouted this is a fayre yonge lady, right gracious, swete, & fayre behauing. As God help me, fayre cosyn, sayde Arthur, she is mine owne: how be it, she is a poore damoyzell, nor hath no thyng but y^e she hath of me; but by the faythe that I owe vnto my lord and father the Duke of Brytayne, I loue her better al naked, than she that I shal haue w^o all the riches of the world, for I must take her agenst my wyll. And therfore, cosyn, I am veryly purposed, that as sone as thys tryumphe is passed, and all straungers be departed, and myne vncle youre fader and all gone, than I thynke to aske lycēce of my fader to goo seke aduentures in some straunge coūtrees, and to take with me alonelye Gouvernar, and

to abyde fro home the space of .v. or .vi. yeres. And so shall I leue her that troubleth me, for in her company in no wyse I can abyde. Truly, syr, sayd Hector, and yf y^t ye wyl thus goo, by the fayth that I owe to you, I wyll departe wyth you, and neuer to leue you whyle that I lyue. A! good cosyn Hector, quod Arthur, it pleaseth mee verely well to haue youre companye, and hertely I thanke you thereof. How be it, I beseche you kepe this thyng secret, that it be not knowen tyll the tyme of our departynge. And as soone as Arthur was departed frome Jehannet, she dyd sende all aboute for mynstrelles, and instrumētes of musyke, and caused all the house to be hanged wyth sylke, and commaunded all her folkes to make as greate joy and feest as they coude ymagen. And so this Arthur rod forth al wayes til he came to Nautes, where as the tables were redy couered to souper. And the duke sette hym downe, and all other lordes, euery man in his place, and they were serued ryght rychely wyth grete joye; and after souper they played and sported thē euery man as he beste lyked, tyll it was season to go to rest; for than it was past mydnighte. And so the duke than entred into his chambre. And Arthur, Hector, and Gouvernar, wēt to se Jehannet; and whan they came nere to the place of the stange they herde greate noyse, & myrthe of instrumentes, and found all the house newly hanged, and the ladyes arayed w^t vestures of pleasure. And they founde as greate apparayle as thoughe a kyng sholde haue come thyder. And Jehannet was apparayled as though she shoulde haue be maryed incōtynēt. And whā she harde that Arthur was come thyder, she came goodly vnto him. It was meruayle than to beholde her, she was so fayre. And as sone as Arthur saw her coming, his herte smyled, and sayde vnto hymselfe: A Jesu! a gentyll and a gracyous metynge is this. As God helpe me, I had rather to haue your company than to be encombred wyth her that I muste haue; and therw^t he clepped her in his armes, and sayd: My swete loue, God that fourmed all the worlde send you a better daye than I haue had a nyght. Syr, sayde Jehannet, God gyue you as good a daye as he hath done to me; for this same nyght I shall be wyth my louer; and God send you in lykewyse wyth yours. Certaynely, sayde Arthur, I repute

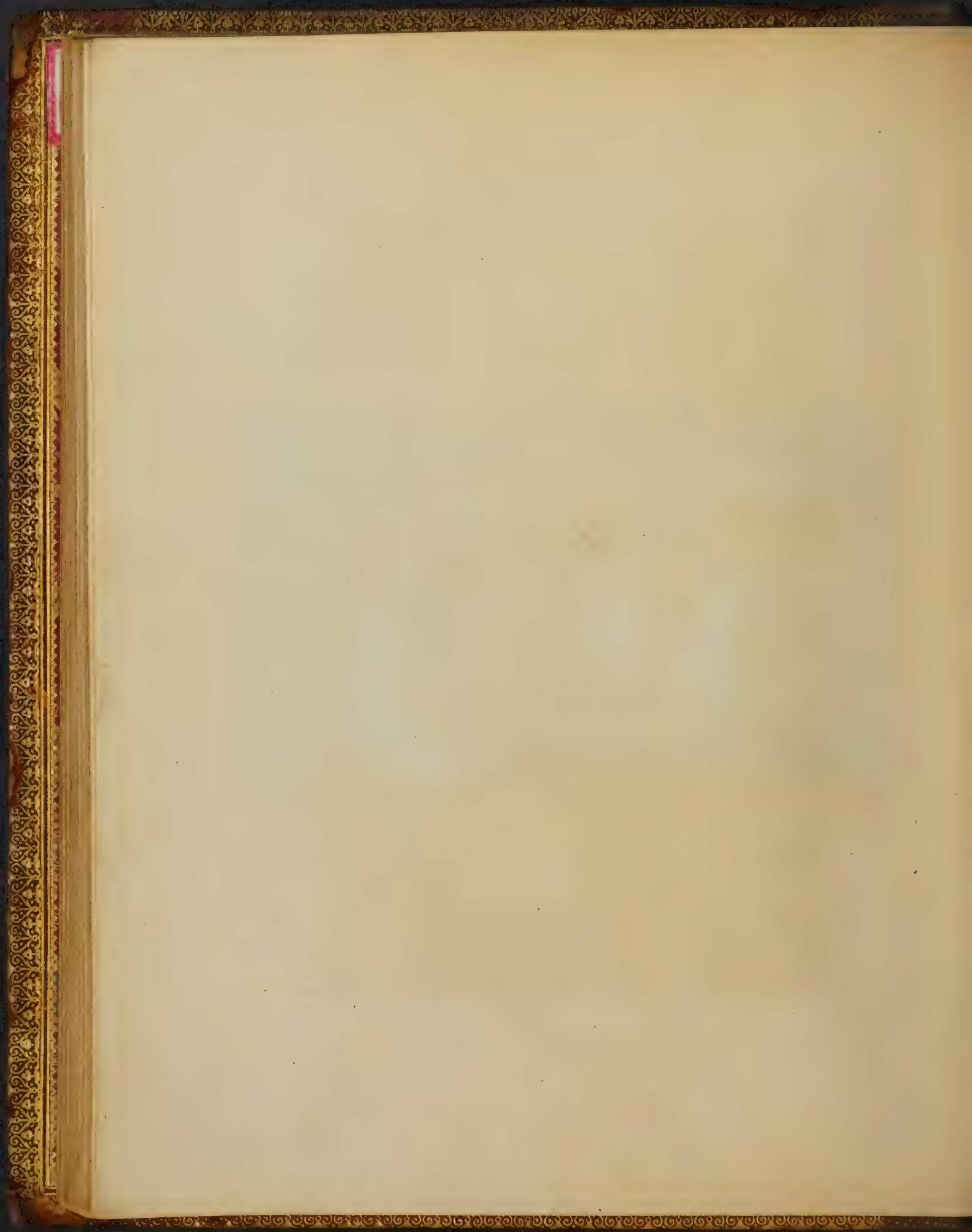
her not for my loue that I shall be with ; but ye y^t shall be, as ye saye, wyth your louer, shal be nerer to my herte than she shall be. But I praye you, swete Jehānet, shew me your louer. Syr, I haue all redy promysed you y^t ye shall se him within these thre dayes, therefore I beseche you to abyde tyll that seasō. With a good wyll, sayd Arthur ; and so taryed there so longe tyll it was fayre daye, and than it behoued hym for to departe.

CAP. XI.

HOWE THAT ARTHUR WEDDED FAYRE PERRON, DOUGHTER TO THE LADY LUKE OF OSTRYGE; AND OF THE PROTESTACION THAT HE MADE BEFORE ALL THE BARONY.

Now sheweth the history, howe y^t whā Arthur, Hector, and Gouvernar, were departed frome Jehannet, they came to the courte. And by that tyme were all lordes, knyghtes, and al other, risen fro theyr rest. And the Archebyshop of Toures was ready to synge masse and solempnyse the matrymony. And than the duke and the duchesse, and all the other lordes, knyghtes, ladyes, and damoysels, dyd conuey Arthur and this ladye Perron to the chyrche. And there, in the sight of all people, & in open audyence, Arthur sayd : I wyll that it be knowen, y^t if euer I fynde trewe suche wordes as I haue herde saye of this lady, thoughe I were wedded to her a houdred thousande tymes, yet I wyll leue and vterly forsake her. And, on that condyciō, I am now contente to take her to my wyfe, and none other wyse. And therto was wel acorded her moder and all other of theyre frendes. And so wyth greate solemnyte they were wedded togyder, & grete was the feaste and joye that than was made in al the cyte : ladies & damoyselles dydde daunce, and made grete ioye and myrthe, and made chaplettes and tokens, & dyd gyue them to lordes and knyghtes in the sygne of loue.





CAP. XII.

HOW THIS LADYE LUKE OF OSTRYGE SENTE FOR JEHANNET, AND CAUSED HER SECRETLY THE FYRST NYGHT TO LYE WITH ARTHUR, BYCAUSE Y^t PERRON WAS NO MAYDE, TO THE ENTENTE Y^t ARTHUR SHOLD NOT PERCEYUE IT.

WE must knowe howe that dame Luke duryng all this seasō that this greate joye and myrth was made, she was in grete thoughte in her herte bycause she knew wel y^t her doughter Perron was no mayde, therfore she doubted greatly to haue vylonye. And, therfore, she wyste not what was beste for her to do.

So at the laste, she called to her one of her owne knyghtes, in whome she trusted beste in all her besynesse; and than she shewed vnto him all the demenoure of Perron, and desyred hym to gyue her, in that behalfe, the beste counsayle y^t he knewe, for she sawe wel howe that Arthur wolde fayne fynde some cause by her to the entente that he myghte be departed fro her company. For, syr, quod she, yf Arthur fynde that she be no mayde, than I doubte me of vylany. Therefore, I requyre you, for Goddes loue, to counsayle me in this case. Than this knyghte, who had to name syr Aunsell, answered & sayd: Madame, syth it is thus, the case muste be suffered as easely as it may be. For whan the dede is done, than it is tyme to take coūsayle both sage and secret. I shall tell you what we shall do: here is by, dwellynge at the stange in the forest, a poore damoyzell ryght fayre and yonge, who hath a moder a ryght good aūcient lady; and I thinke verely she be a good mayde. Sende vnto her moder parte of your syluer and golde, and promyse to doo for her many other thynges, so that she wyll lende you her doughter for this fyrste nyghte, to lye wyth Arthur tyll mydnyght be paste. And I thynke verely ye shall haue her, yf she be wysely entreted, and secretly. And than, yf ye haue her whā Perron sholde be layde in the bedde, she shal be in her stede tyl that Arthur be a slepe; and than she shall ryse:

and so than Perron shall lye downe by Arthur. A, syr! sayd the lady, for Gods sake thynke on to brynge this mater aboute. Take my charyot & fyue hondred poundes of golde, and bere it vnto her moder, and shewe her how I shall gyue her large londes, and rentes, and shal mary her doughter ryght hyghly, soo that I maye haue her this nyght. So thā incontinent this knyghte lepte on his horse, and tooke wyth hym the golde and the charyot, and caused it to be couered, and rode vnto the stange, where as he founde this fayre lady and her doughter, & dyde salute them ryght swetely, and drewe theym aparte, and sayde to the lady: Madame, I am come hyther to you fro my ladye Luke of Ostryge, who ryght tenderly sendeth gretynge vnto you, as she that fro hēs-forth wyl be your enspecyall loue and frende, and aboue all other wyll loue & honour you: and in the sygne of loue she hathe sente you fyue hondreth poundes of golde: and ferthermore promyseth you to gyue you greate londes and goodes, and to mary ryght hyely Jehānet your doughter, so that ye wyll do her that bounte and pleasure, nōw at this tyme, as to sende your doughter to her, to the entente to lye thys fyrst night with Arthur of Brytayne tyll mydnyght. For the case is soo, that Perron her doughter is not in soo good poynte as she wolde she were, for she hath trespaced wyth another knyght. Therefore, good lady, I humbly requyre you for to be her speciall loue and frende in this mater; greate charyte it is one lady for to saue y^e worshyp and honoure of another. Than sayde the lady, I thanke my lady Luke for the greate loue and honour that she presēteth to me, yf theyr were eyther loue or honoure in this case, syr knyghte, as me thynketh here lacketh loue, whan she requyreth my shame and dyshonoure; for she wolde that I shold sell to her my doughter for her moneye. Certaynly that I shall neuer do it to dye therfore. I praye you bere her agayne this money, & God gyue her good aduenture. Than Jehannet sayd vnto her moder: Madame, for Goddes sake be ye not dyspleased wyth my wordes; for, sauynge your grace, this desyre that this knyghte maketh is no sellynge of me, for my lady Luke is a greate and noble pryncesse. Therefore her velony sholde be more spoken than yf she where of a meane estate; and

all women oughte to put theyr payne to couer & to hyde suche maters; and also euery woman to helpe & sustayn the blame and defame of other. And this lady requyreth not youre vylonye, for she dooth it to hyde her owne dyshonoure. Truely doughter, quod the lady, the moder y^t demeneth not wysely her chylde is to be blamed; and yf my lady Luke haue not kept this lady Perron her doughter as curiouslye & as wysely as I haue doone you, and by the which necligence now she is renne into folly & daunger, let her take it a worth & thanke no body but her selfe. Madame, sayde Jehannet, it is a harde thyng to ouercome youthe; for yf thys lady Perron haue doone amysse, who hath ben easely & swetly norysshed, and euery creature desyrus to serue her in gre, madame, beholde the myghte of loue by whome she was ouercome. For she loued, & was loued agayne. Remembre also the greates ease wherin she hath all her yongth bene norysshed, the whyche ouercame her, & putte in to her herte amorous loue. Madame, haue pitie on the sinner; for, by the fayth y^t I ow to you, I wyll fullfyll y^e pleasure of my lady Luke. In sauynge of her honour I shall put myne in jeopardy. How be it, syr knight, take agayne your money; for yf I shold take money, I shoulde sell my bodye, the whych I wyll not do. For y^t I doo is freely for the loue of my lady Luke; and she shall do me good whan it shal please her best. Than her moder sayd to her: Syth ye wyll nedes do as ye lyst, and yf ye do folly, take the aduenture that wyll fall therof; for moche better is worth a woman to be poore and true, than to be folysse & riche. Ye shall not go for me, nor by my wyll; for honour surmounteth all thinges. Madame, y^t ye saye is of trouthe: how be it I requyre you suffer and let me alone. Syr knyght, let us departe; we tary very longe. Myne owne fayre damoyzell, sayde the knyght, I humbly thanke you; and for certayne I ensure you ye shall be ryght hyely rewarded, & therto I wyll be pledge. Than the knyghte lefte the golde there, for any thyng y^t Jehannet coulede do the contrary.

And so Jehannet mounted in to the chariot, and rode forthe; and whan they were come to the courte, the lady Luke receyued her ryghte pryuely, & kepte her tyll it was tyme to go to bedde, and

than pryuely they layde Jehānet in the bedde in the stede of Perron; and the courtaynes of the bed wer hanged betwene the lyght and her. And than came Arthur and the duke his fader. And thā the duke sayde: Sone Arthur, ye shall gyue to Perron your wyfe this nyght y^e charter of her endowry, wherin is comprysed the londe of the cyte of saintes and of Poys, attenyng to the boundes of Gasgoyne: and also ye shall giue her this rynge, w^t this ryche & precyous emeraude; this endowry mounteth well to the some of .x. thousande poūde by annuall rente. Than it was tyme for Arthur to go to bedde; and whan he was goyng therto, the lady Luke sayde to hym: Good dere loue Arthur, I requyre you that ye speke this nyght as lytle as ye maye doo to Perron my doughter; for she is somewhat shamfast. Veryly, madame, quod Arthur, with a righte good wyll, and so wente he to bedde.

CAP. XIII.

HOWE THAT JEHANNET WHO THAT WAS A BEDDE WITH ARTHUR
IN THE STEDE OF HIS WYFE PERRON, & OR SHE WOLDE SUFFER
HYM TO TOUCHE HER SHE DEMAUDED HER ENDOWRYE.

AND whā that Arthur was thus a bedde, he beganne to draw nere to his wyfe as to his knowlege. Than Jehannet counterfayted her speche, and sayd softly: Syr, it is so, or ye touche me, I wyll knowe what shall be min endowry. I requyre you, syr, assygne it to me; and than shall I be readye to fulfyll all your commaundemente. Than Arthur toke the charter and the rynge, and delyuered them to Jehannet, and sayde: My loue Perron ye shall haue a fayre endowry, for it draweth nere to the some of .x. thousande pounce; and so dydde put the rynge vpon one of her fyngers. My ryghte dere lorde, sayde Jehannet, I humbly thanke you; and so toke the charter and the rynge, and

layde theym by priuely vnder the beddes syde. So thus was Jehānet moost parte of the nyghte wyth Arthur in grete ioye and myrthe vntyll the tyme that Arthur fell a slepe, for he had not slepte of al y^e nyghte before. And whyle that he thus slepte, Jehannet pryuely rose and tooke wyth her the charter of Perrons endowrye, and came to the lady Luke. And incontinent she was cōueyd agayne pryuely to the istange to her moder. And than was Perron put softly in to the bedde to Arthur, who woke not tyll it was fayre daye. And whan he was waken, he sawe where as Perron laye fast a slepe by hym, for she had not slepte of all the nyght tyll than.

CAP. XIV.

HOWE THAT ARTHUR, HECTOR, AND GOUERNAR, WENTE ERLY IN THE MORNYNGE TO SE JEHANNET AT THE STANGE, WHO SHEWED VNTO ARTHUR ALL THE TREASON OF HIS WYFE, AND HOWE THAT SHE HAD LAYNE WITH HIM AL THAT NYGHT IN THE STEDE OF PERRON; WHEREOF HE GRETELY MERUAYLED.

AND whan Arthur sawe her so slepe, he lette her lye, and rose fayre and softly. And at that tyme there were none in all the palays oute of theyr beddes, for it was than about thre of y^e clocke, saue all onelye Hector and Gouvernar. And whan Arthur sawe them, goodlye he gaue them good morowe, and sayd : Syrs, I praye you let vs lepe vpon our horses, and go se Jehannet. Wherwyth they said they were well content, and soo rode forthe tyl they came to the stange ; at which tyme Jehannet was lade on her bedde in her clothes, and were fallen a slepe, & was couered wyth a mantell of grene. And therwyth she wooke ; and whan she harde that Arthur was come, she rose vp halfe slepynge, and sette her vpon her bedde syde ; and therwyth Arthur came in to

the chambre; and incontynente that she sawe hym she waxed greatly ashamed, & blusshed rede, and caste downe her loke to the erthe; wherof Arthur had grete meruayle, and said: What chere make you, fayre loue Jehannet; ye were wonte to come clippe and kysse me, and to make me greate feest: and nowe it semeth ye be halfe slepyng; what is the cause ye be rysen soo early, and thus to slepe clothed on youre bedde? Syr, sayde Jehānet, it behoueth me so to doo; for I was nere to my lorde and louer whan it was conueniente for me to ryse. And how, fayre lady, was it y^t youre lorde and louer dydde not retayne you styll? for I meruayle that he woulde suffre you to ryse frome hym so erly. Certaynely, syr, wan I rose he was a slepe. A! swete loue, why dydde ye not than wake hym? Certaynly, syr, I thoughte not to doo hym soo moche trouble. Than it semeth, fayre Jehannet, that ye loue hym? Certaynly, syr, that it is true, more than al the worlde. A! fayre loue Jehānet, is that he that ye haue sayde shoulde marye you? Certaynly, syr ye; and this nyght he hath lyen wyth me. Wel, fayre lady, I pray you, what hath he gyuen you to your endowry? Syr, as God helpe me, he hathe endowed me ryght rychelye; for he hathe gyuen me well .x. thousande pounde by annuall rente. Ten thousand pounde, fayre loue! sayd Arthur; that is a greate gyfte. Than it semeth he is a ryght grete man and a ryche, and hath ryghte greate frendes. Perron, my wyfe, hath no gretter endowrye. Syr, I can not saye what she hath; but I am put in possessyon therof by a charter, and by a fayre rynge. By my fayth, quod Arthur, that same possessyon haue I gyuen vnto Perron, my wyfe: and I praye you, dere herte, shewe me your charter and rynge. Syr, wyth a right good wyll.

Than she toke a boxe y^t was at her beddes syde, and dydde open it, and deliuered it to Arthur. And whan he saw it, he knew right well the seale of his fader, and so loked on the rynge, and knew it ryght well, wherof he had great meruayle. And than he called vnto hym Hector and Gouvernar, and demaunded of theym yf they knewe that seale or not. Syr, without fayle, thys is the seale of my lorde your fader. A mercy God! quod

Arthur, swete loue Jehannet, where hadde you this rynge and charter? Syr, ye delyuered it to me out of your owne handes in to myn. Of my delyueraunce! quod Arthur: I praye you, fayre lady, where was that? Certaynly, syr, in your bedde. In my bed, fayre loue! and whan was that? As God helpe me, syr, this same nyghte paste. And how, fayre ladye, maye I haue perfite knowlege therof? Myn owne dere lorde and loue, maye it please you to remembre that whan ye were a bedde ye would haue had me to haue fulfilled youre pleasure; but fyrst I desyred of you to knowe what sholde be my endowrye: and ye answered me that ye had gyuen me the cyte of Sayntes and of Poys, & all the countree attaynyng to the boundes of Gascoyn; and this rynge ye dydde put on my fynger, and than delyuered me this charter. In the name of God, quod Arthur, these tokens bereth wytnes that all that ye saye sholde be of trouthe; but I requyre you, swete loue, tell me howe ye came into my bedde. Syr, knowe ye for trouthe, that Perron, your wife, was no mayde; for before that tyme she hadde done a forfayte. And so there she shewed vnto hym howe that dame Luke of Ostryge doubted gretely to haue velony; and sayd: Syr, therefore she sent syr Aunsel, her trusty knight, vnto my moder and me, and fyue hondred pounce of golde; the whyche all ready is here, as ye maye see. And ferthermore she shewed to hym all the demenoure of the knyghte and of her moder; and howe, in conclusyon, she went to the court, and so by the lady Luke was broughte into his bedde in the stede of his wife Perron; and howe, aboute midnyghte, whan that he was a slepe, she priuely rose from him, and than was Perron put in to the bedde. And whan that Arthur hadde hearde all this processe, he maruayled greatlye therof; howe be it he had greate ioy therof in his herte, and swetely clepyd and kyssed Jehannet, and sayde: Fayre loue, ye sayde full true to me whan ye shewed me that you had bene all nyght with your louer; for truly so haue ye ben, for I ensure you I am your faythful louer; and I am right glad of this aduenture, for now shal ye abyde still with me, and she that hath wrought thys treason to me shall departe with sorow and shame. I requyre you kepe surely this ring &

charter : and whā I sende for you, be not dysmayde, but boldly come to me, apparayled in the best maner that ye can be, and your moder also. Syr, with a right good wyll, sayd Jehānet. How be it I require your noblenesse not to be miscontente with me for this dede, nor to think that I dyd it for any wanton sensuall appetite ; for, syr, I take God to recorde I dyd it for none entent but onely for the singuler loue y^t I haue to you ; and y^t by that meanes ye shoulde haue knowledge of the false demenour of your wyfe : for I should rather haue suffred to haue be drawn with wylde horses than euer I wolde haue consented to haue done thys dede with any other creature liuing ; for other louer thā ye be, wyl I not haue, & neuer had. A! my right dere hert ! sayd Arthur, I pray to God I lyue neuer lenger yf I should for thys matter thinke anye yll in you ; for of verye right I ought to thanke you as much as al my pleasure in this worlde cometh to ; for now & ye had not ben, my dayes should haue be continewed with doloure and jelousy, wherof I am now dyscharged by youre meanes. For I wil now vtterli forsake her company. And so shall I lyue out of doubte and trouble, & me shal ye haue as faythful and true as euer ye had, & better if it might be. And so right swetelye he toke of her his leue and departed, & rode forth, deuysing and talking with Hector and Gouvernar of this aduenture. And Hector sayd to him : As God help me, faire cosin Arthur, this great treason y^t is don to you shal surely be quit ; for, by y^e grace of God, yet before Easter next comyng, I shall ouer renne her countrey with baners dysplayed, & shall not leue standyng neyther castel nor toure vp right ; but I shall bruise them downe to the erth. And by the fayth y^t I owe vnto God Almyghty, yf she were a man, as she is a womā, I wolde neyther drynke ne eate tyll I had stryken her head fro her shoulders. Well, frende, quod Arthur, this besinesse must wysely be demeaned.

And so these gentil knightes rode forthe, deuysynge on thys mater, tyll they came to Nautes ; and than they went to the palays, at whych tyme all lordes & knightes were redye apparayled, and there was so great ioy and feast that it was maruayle to think thereon. And whan the duke saw Arthur his son, he began to smyle, & de-

maunded of hym whether that his wyfe were ded. Nay, syr, quod the Erle of Aniou, I thinke she slepeth fast in her bed. Well, well, syrs, quod Arthur, fayre and easylye: there is other thinges that ye knowe full lytle therof; and sayd to his father: Syr, and it please you, it is of trouthe ye haue married me, and giuen me the charter of the dowrie of Perron my wyfe, and also a ryng w^t a flaming emeraude. Syr, I know not whether there be in thys charter anye thyng the whiche that ought to be amended: therefore I wolde not, though other wyse come of me thā wel, that Perron should lose her endourie for lacke of formall makinge. Therefore I requyre you let the charter be broughte forth, and redde openly in the presence of mine vncles & of the archebysshop: and yf it ought to be amended, I beseche you let it be reformed by thē. It is wel sayd, sone, quod the duke; and where is it? Syr, Perron hath it, for I delyuered it to her thys nyght past. Let it be sente for, fayre neuwe, sayd the Erle of Bloys. So than y^e lady Luke and Perron were broughte forth to the duke, who sayd: Perrō, fayre doughter, Arthur your husbände thinketh wel on your profit; therefore bring forth your charter of your dowry that Arthur gaue you this night, & yf it ought to be reformed, it shal be amended. Syr, sayd Perron, it suffyseth me ryght well as it is, for I am ther with ryght well content. Well, doughter, sayde the duke, yet for that it pleaseth me that it shal be seene & rede. Syr, quod she, in good truth I haue it not. Whye, where is it than? quod the duke. Syr, surely I haue sente it by a trusty messenger into my owne coūtre. Well, fayre doughter, quod the duke, hardly haue ye no doubte nor fere therof; for here is none that wolde begyle you, and therefore hardly and boldly bring it forth before me. And therewith Gouvernar stepped forth; for his herte was so great and mightie for velonye that was doone to Arthur his maister, that he coude not absteine, ne forbere hymself no lenger, but in open audience he sayde to the duke: Syr, it is of trouthe ye haue maryed my lorde Arthur your son to such a woman that the whiche ought not to be receiued in matrimony with so greute a gentylman, and of so hie a lygnage, as my lorde your son is; for she is a woman dishonoured in euery noble mans

courte, as she that hath abādoned her wyl vnto an other man than to my lorde Arthur, as it well appereth; for she hath defouled her bodi with a nother knight: and therefore this night she caused an other damoyzell, who was a true mayde, to lye by my lorde Arthur. And to proue that this is true that I say, beholde here this knight syr Aunsell, who conueyed thys damoyssel, and left with her moder fyue hondred ponde in golde, the which dame Luke of Ostryge dyd sende vnto her: and whan she had brought this damoyssel, she was layde a bed with my lorde Arthur. How be it she was not so folish but or she wold suffre my lorde to touche her, she demaunded of him her dowrye: and so my lorde Arthur delyuered to her the charter and the ringe, as he thought none yll. And in dede, syr, to certefye this thinge, sende for the damoyssel; and than shal ye know, by her owne mouthe, all the trouth how my lorde was betrayed.

So than incontīnēt this damoisel was sent for, and her moder also. And whan that Jehannet was come there, openlye she declared all the matter, and shewed forth the charter and the ringe. Than was the duke and duchesse greatly dysmayed, and all other lordes and frendes of Arthur. Than stept forth syr Aunsell, and cast his gloue agaynst this damoyssel Jehannet, and sayde, y^t he neuer went to fetch that mayde, ne brought neuer the foresayde money to her, and that he wolde proue agaynst any that wolde say the cōtrary. Therwith the gentil Hector cam forth, and cast his gloue agaynst the knight in the damoyssels quarrel, and sayde, how that he wolde proue y^t he falselye lyed lyke a false traytour. And as to you, dame Luke of Ostryge, I ensure you ye haue not in al your cōūtre castel nor toure neuer so stronge, but I shall breke them downe to the earthe; and fro henceforth repute me for your enemie, surely for so am I, and wyll be. And, syr duke, I beseche you receyue my gloue agaynst thys knyght, who hath falsely and traytoursly deceyued my cosyn Arthur. Syr, quod Gouvernar, ye shall not do so; for it is agaynst reason that so hie a person as ye be sholde do batayle with such a false traytour, sythe there be other to take the quarell in hande. This matter toucheth my lorde,

and I am his man, & haue noryshed him vp in his youth ; therefore I ought to defende his right. And therewith he cast downe his glove, & said : Gentil and honourable knight duke, receyue my guage, and do right to my lord your son ; for I say that this damoyzell Jehannet sayth truth in euery thinge, & this knight falsly lieth : and that I wyl proue my body agaynst his. And so therewith the duke receyued Gouvernars guage, and also the knightes ; and the batayle was iudged to be done the next day ensuyng, without lenger delay.

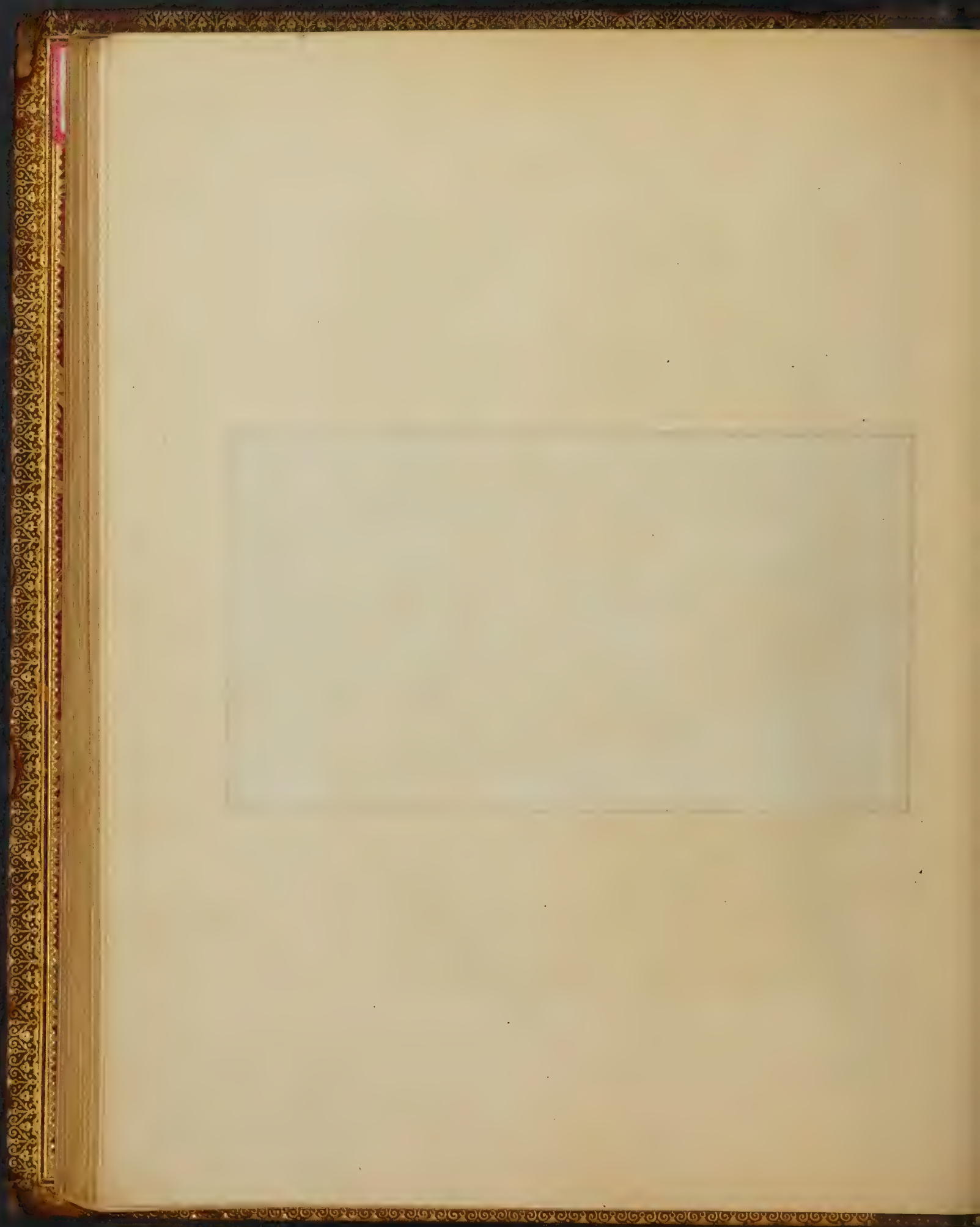
CAP. XV.

HOWE Y^t GOVERNAR VAYNQYSSHED IN BATAYLE SYR AUNSEL,
& CAUSED HIM TO MAKE KNOWLEDGE OF THIS TREASON, &
CONFESSED HOW Y^t HE BROUGHT JEHANNET FRO THE STANGE
FOR TO LIE AL NIGHT W^t ARTHUR.

WHAN the batayle was thus determined to be the next day, Hector was not content in his mynde, bycause hys guage was not receyued. So in this maner, as for that day, they wente to there restes. And the next morninge by tymes, Arthur and Gouvernar, and all other lordes his frendes, went to y^e chirche to here masse ; and there Gouvernar dyd fyrst offre, and after him all other. And whan the masse was ended, Arthur ledde forth Gouvernar to his chambre to be armed. And whan he was surely armed, he lept on a mighty courser. And Arthur and Hector were armed, & mounted on theyr horses, to kepe the feelde, to the entent that there should be no treasō ; and the Erle of Bloys went to the place where as they should fight. Than by y^e tyme was armed syr Aunsell, & came in the plase. So thā there was brought forth sayntes and bokes, wheron Gouvernar did swere, y^t falsely & vntruly Jehannet, the damoyssel of the stange, was brought by syr

Aunsel vnto the court, & by his aduise she was put into the bed to Arthur, in the stede of Perron his wife. And whā he had thus sworne, he kyssed the sayntes, and rose like an hardy knight. And than syr Aūsel did swere, with great fere and trouble, how that Gouvernar sayde by hym vntrulye. And so he rose with great trouble and payne; and all the people y^t saw him sayd that he had an euyll cōtenaunce, & be semyng shold be in the wronge. And whā they were both mouēd on theyr horses, than was it cried by an haraude of armes, y^t eche of them should do theyr best. Than sayde Arthur to Gouvernar: Now, myn owne good frēde, quite you lyke a valiaunt knight. And so these two drewe aparte fro other, and dressed their speres to the restes, & dashed theyr sporres to the horses sydes, & met togider so rudely, y^t they frusshed theyr speres to theyr listes like hardye knightes and ful of great valure. How be it syr Aunselles valure was not to be compared w^t Gouvernar; for Gouvernar had ben a man greatly to be redoubted. And after the breking of theyr speres, they past by; and in the retorninge they set theyr hādes to theyr swerdes. And Gouvernar stroke syr Aunsell so rudely, that he dyd ryue his shelde to the bocle, and brake a great parte of his harneys; so that the swerde entred depe into the flesshe. And syr Aunsel stroke agayne Gouvernar on the helme, and brake with the stroke many barres therof; and the stroke glented downe on the lifte syde, and share a way a great parte of his harneys to the bare sadell; but God kept him that it entred not into the fleshe. Than Gouvernar florysshed agayne his swearde, & stroke syr Aunsell on the heyght on his helme, and cut it to the harde sercle of stele; and the stroke glenced downe by the shelde so rudely, that he claue it to the middes. And w^t the same stroke the swerde did lighte on the necke of the horse, wherwyth the horse was so sore wounded, that he fell downe to the erthe. And whan syr Aunsell felte his horse fallen vnder hym, he lept on his feet with his swerde in hys hande; wherfore he was of some greatly praysed; and some other dyd greatlye prayse the stroke of Gouvernar. And whā Gouvernar saw him on the erthe, he thought y^t he wolde not renne on his enemy with his horse, he being on fote. Therefore





incontinent he dyd a lyght downe on fote, and putte his shelde before hym, & wente sekynge his enemy; and gaue hym such a stroke, that he strake a waye parte of his cheke; & the stroke dyscended to his sholder, & wouDED him to the harde bones; wherw^t syr Aunsel was constrayned to knele, & right nere to haue fallen. Than al the lordes sayd y^t theyr was nō coude longe endure the strokes of Gouvernar. Therewith Arthur laughed with a good herte, so that Gouvernar harde hym, wherby his herte douwbled in courage. And whan syr Aunsel felt hymself thus hardly bestad, he sware in his mynde y^t he wolde be auenged of that stroke, and therewith lyfte vp hys swerd to haue striken Gouvernar: but whan he sawe the stroke coming, he put his shelde before hym, and aduysed wel how that syr Aunsell had his arme vp a loft, and w^t a backe stroke he stroke at syr Aunsell vnder the armour so rudely, y^t the arme & swerde & all flew into the felde: wherof syr Aunsel had so much payne, that he fel to the erth in a traunce. And than Gouvernar lept to hym to haue stryken of hys head: but he cryed for Gods sake mercy. Than came the duke and Arthur, Hector, and other lordes and knightes; and there, in the presence of them al, he recounted al the treason, and how that he went for Jehannet, and brought her to his lady Luke; and how that he was of counsaile that she should be put a bedde with Arthur, in the stede of Perron. Than he had iugemēt for his trespass, suche as he had deserued. So than Gouvernar was led home by Arthur & Hector, and caused to be vnarmed, whome they founde wythout any hurte: wherof they thanked God. And than Jehannet had as great ioye as anye creature coude haue; and she clypped and kyssed Gouvernar oftentimes with good herte. Than all the other erles and barons came to Gouvernar, and demaūded hī how he did. He answered and sayd: Right wel, thanked be God; and felte none hurte. The same propre houre the lady Luke departed sodaynly out of the courte, & her doughter Perron, and with her great shame and foule rebuke. And whan they were in the felde on theyr way, than this lady Luke sayde vnto her doughter: Thys great shame that we haue hast thou caused; for now we shal neuer haue honour, nor be reputed ho-

norable; and therewith hertely she wept: wherof Perron tooke so great inwarde thought, that she dyed within .xx. dayes after. And so thereby Arthur was agayne at his liberte. And Jehānet fro thensforth remayned styl in the courte with the duchesse, and was ryght well beloued with euery creature. And the duke and duchesse were well acorded that she sholde kepe styll the endoury that Arthur had gyuen her. And so she kepte it tyl suche season as Arthur caused her to be crowned a quene, and gaue her Gouvernar in mariage, as it is more playnely conteyned in this present boke.

CAP. XVI.

HOW ARTHUR DEMAUDED LICENCE OF HIS FADER AND MODER TO GO PLAY HYM OUTE OF HIS OWNE COUNTRE; FOR HE WOLDE GOE SEKE ADVENTURES, TO SHEW THERBY HIS FORCE AND PROWESSE.

AFTER the ende of .xv. dayes, tidinges came vnto the duke and to Arthur, that the fayre Perron was decessed, and passed out of this worlde: of the whiche tidinges Arthur hadde ryght greate ioye, and specyally Jehannet. How be it, the kynge, for his honour and worshyppe, caused her obsecuyce to be done ryght solempnely in he chirche. And than after thys the courte departed, and euery man repayred in to theyr owne countreys, sauynge all onelye Hector, who remayned styl with Arthur. And so in great ioye and myrth they cōtinewed with the duke, and Arthur whā it pleased him to take his pastaūce with the fayre Jehannet. So it fortunēd on a nyght that Arthur, Hector, and Gouvernar, were all thre lodged in one chambre: and on a night Arthur was sore troubled in his slepe, & torned and sighed manye times, so y^t Hector and Gouvernar harde him, and sayd eche to other: Arthur is not well at his ease, let vs go wake him. And thā Gouver-

nar woke hī, and axed him what he eyllid. A! frende Gouvernar, sayd Arthur; I have be sore troubled in my slepe; for I dremed that I was fer out of this countrey. A! syr, sayde Hector: we ought to go into straunge countreys; for before this tyme ye haue promised so to do. Therefore set your minde no lēger to tary at home, but shortely lette vs departe. As God helpe me, cosyn, sayde Arthur, the day is come, that for to haue the citie of Paris I wyl tary no lenger; for to morow wil I axe licence of my fader and of my moder; and will haue w^t me no more cōpany but you and Gouvernar, and Jaket my squyre. Syr, sayd Gouvernar, ye say well; for a yonge man w^toute payn is litle worth. How be it, syr, I doute me greatly y^t ye shal get no leue. Verely, sayd Arthur, I shal assay to morow next. And so they lay still all that night tyll it was daye. Than rose Arthur and hys company. And whan the duke was vp, Arthur came before him with his bonet in his hande, and kneeled downe to the erthe, and humbly requyred both hys fader and moder y^t it wolde please them to giue hym licence to go play hym a seasō out of that countrey; wherewith in there myndes they were sore dyspleased, and entysed him as muche as they myght to leue his enterpryse; but in no wyse they coude torne his minde: and at the laste, wyth sore weping, they gaue him licēce, and enquiryed of him with whome he wolde be acōpanied. Right dere father, I wyl haue none other company, but alonely my cosin Hector and Gouvernar, and Jaket my squyre. Wel, dere son, syth ye wyl not abyde, take w^t you gold and syluer at your pleasure. Than Gouvernar came to Arthur, and demaunded of hym what space it wolde be or he wold retorne into his owne countrey. Verely, quod Arthur, the space of fiue yeres.

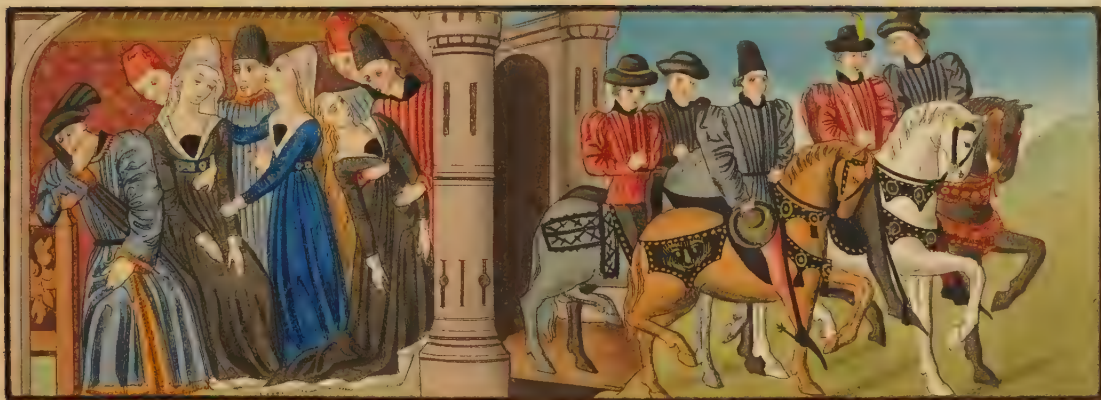
So then anone these tidinges were sprad a brode in the courte, and all aboute the countrey, how that Arthur wolde depart out of that countrey, and tary out fyue yeres. And at the last Jehannet herd therof, wherwith all her bloud trembled and quake, and ranne out of her chambre to the palays, where as the duke and duchesse were together right sore weping. And than she perceyued wel how that it was of trouth; wherwith nie her lif had past, and therw^t she fel downe in a deadlie traunce in the armes of her mother. And

whan she reuyued, she cryed & sayd : A ! Arthur, my swete loue, with thys iorney shall this poore orphelyne lose her good lord and chief father. A ! Arthur, my dere herte, wyll ye thus leue me ? And whā the duke saw her make this great lamentacion, than opened his herte, and rendred many a salte tere with his eyen. And in this season Gouvernar aperayled all suche necessary thinges as was metely for theyr departyng.

Than Arthur tooke leue of his father and moder, who were right sorowful of his departyng. And than he went to Jehan-net to take his leue of her ; and as soone as she sawe him she ranne and toke him in her armes, and sayd ryght pyteously : A ! right swete syr, the ende of my herte and loue, how can you fynde in youre herte to leue this poore orpheline ? And whan Arthur harde her speke so swetely, it touched nerer to his herte than of all the sorow both of fader and moder, and of all his kynne. But, fynally, he commaunded her to God, and sayd : Fayre swete loue, I requyre you to praye to God for me ; for I promysse you, yf I lyue, I wyll do you more good and honour than as yet euer ye had ; & so kyste her swetely and departed, & mounted on his horse ; & he was in a garmente couered al with grene, gyrt about w^t a rede lase ; and bothe he and Hector and Gouvernar were al in a sute in scarlet hosen ; and eche of them a chaplet on theyr hedes lyke yonge lusty louers. And they roode so longe tyll they were oute of the towne. Than Arthur entred in to a grete thought, & rode musyng a greate space. And whan Hector sawe him in y^t case, he called Gouvernar to hym, & sayd : Frende, se ye not howe Arthur rideth musyng ? I holde it beste we breke hym out of his thoughte. Therwith Hector called Arthur, and demaunded of hym what him ayled to ryde so sadly. And whan Arthur harde hym, he tourned his heade to hym warde, and sayde : Fayre cosyn, I praye you come ryde here by my syde, and Gouvernar on the other syde. And whan Arthur was betwene them, he sayde : Friendes, I haue mused all this season of my dreame that I had this laste night : whan ye woke me, I tolde you parte, but not all ; and surely it is the chefe cause wherefore I haue take on me this iorneye. Herken to me, and I

Plate 4.

To face page 38.





shal shewe you all my hole dreme ; for no thyng can I hyde fro you. This laste nyght, whan I was in my fyrste slepe, me thought I was in the moost fayrest place in all the worlde, where I sawe a fresshe fountayne; and me thought the beaute therof caused me to syt downe on the brym therof, and with the fayr clere water therof washed my face and handes. And, fynally, I cast vp myne eyes alofte; and on my ryght hand me thought I sawe the richeste pauilion pyghte that euer was sene; and in the hyght of this paulyon was an egle of golde, the richest and the fayreste that coude be deuysed; & properly me thoughte I sawe this egle come downe & lyght on my bosome, & shewed me so greate sygne of loue, that it pleased me so muche that I coude not be satysfied w^t beholdynge therof; & me thought it flykered aboute me wyth her wynges, in the sygne of grete loue. And at the last me thought I sawe where came to me warde a grete griffon, foule and horrible; and he broughte wyth hym a great multytude of serpentis, wherw^t all the earth aboute me was couered; and me thought they wolde haue taken fro me myn egle, who was ryght ferde, and couered her euer by me, and loked on me swetely; in maner as thoughe she wolde haue sayde: Arthur, kepe me. And than me thoughte I toke my swerde in my hande, and so fought with this gryffon & al these serpentis, by whome me thought I suffered moche payne in great peryll: but at the laste me thoughte there came a turtyll to helpe me, & brought with her many douues. And out of an other parte I sawe where came a sparhawke, accompanied w^t many faucons. And all these dyde me suche socoure, that we slewe y^e gryffon and all the other serpentis. And so daynely than me thoughte that the egle and y^e turtyll and I were in a hye toure, and bothe you Hector and Gouvernar with me. And to vs me thoughte came people w^tout nombre; and me thoughte there was a lyon & foure grete leopardes; and all they didde encluye theym selfe to me warde, & didde me grete honour. And they were al crowned w^t golde; & me thought they gaue the egle frely to me. And she pleased me soo well, that I woulde neuer haue departed by my wyll fro her company. And euer syth I woke, my herte and loue hath ben so set on y^e egle, that I can

not draw my herte fro her ; for I loue her so entyerly, y^t as longe as I lyue I shall neuer cease to trauell & laboure tyll I haue found her. And this is the verye cause wherfore I am departed out of myn owne countree. Verely, syr, sayd Gouvernar, this betokeneth y^t greate honour shall come to you ; for, syr, ye knowe wel the lyon, who, as ye thoughte, dyd gyue you the egle, is a beest ryall ; for the lyon is kyng of all beestes, and the egle is kyng of all foules. Soo the sygnifycacyon therof is, that a kyng shall gyue you a quene ; how be it grete payne shall ye fyrst suffer. And the griffō y^t wolde haue taken fro you youre egle, betokeneth some grete man y^t wolde haue her that shall be gyuen to you. Therefore it shall behoue you to conquere her with the swerde. And, syr, I Gouvernar, your servaūt am here y^t neuer shall fayle you whyle I lyue. No more shall I, fayre cosyn, sayd Hector, by the fayth that I owe vnto my lorde my father. Frendes, sayd Arthur, I hartely thanke you. And so they rode forth on theyr waye. And because ye shall vnderstande the sygnifycacyon of the egle and the lyon, therfor we shall leaue for a season spekyng of Arthur and his company rydyng on theyr iorney ; & ye shall heare of this egle tyll tyme shall be that we retourne agayn to Arthur.

CAP. XVII.

HOW THE MYGHTY KYNGE OF SOROLOIS, CALLED EMENDUS, HELDE OPEN COURTE IN HIS REALME, WHERE AS WAS FOURE PUYSSAUNTE KYNGES, WHO WERE ALL HIS SUBIECTES ; AND HERE YE SHALL HERE OF THYNGES MERUAYLOUS.

In the seasō that Arthur thus rode, as ye haue herde here before, there was in the realme of Soroloys a kyng ; the whiche realme is in Ind the More, ioyning to the greate see called Betee, and also

to the Rede See betwene Mesopotanye & Perse. This kynge had to name Emendus, ryght puyssaunt of hauyour & frendes; and he had vnder him four kynges, myghty and puyssaunt, who were vnder his obeysaunce, & helde all theyr realmes of hym. Wherof the fyrste was kynge of Orquany, the which is on the syde of Babilon, the which realme extendeth to the Rede See; & this lande was full of gyauntes. The second was kyng of the realme of Mormall, the whiche is in the lond of Sodome and Gomorre, & it extendeth to the londe ioynynge to the Dead See. And this kyng myght well brynge in batayl better thā a hōdred .M. fyghtynge men. The thyrde hathe the gouernance of the realme of Valefounde, a very obscure & darke londe, & the people therof as blacke as sote; and it extēdeth into the oryent, where as the son ryseth, the whiche people were greatly doubted in battayle or warre; for they were without pyte, and dydde eate raw fleshe lyke dogges. The fourthe kynge was of the realme of Ismaelyte, the which extendeth into Eghypt, and vnto the land of Femene. These .iiii. kinges were subiectes to the mighty kīg of Soroloys, Emendus, who hadde to wyfe a noble lady named Fenyce, by the reason of the countre y^t she was borne in; for it was named Fenyx, bycause in that countree bredde a byrde y^t was called fenyx. And in all the worlde there is neuer but one; & as it is sayde, whan she is olde and auntyent, there she maketh her neste of drye thornes on the heyghte of an hye mountayne, as nere the sonne as she can; so y^t by the hete of the sonne the nest quickeneth, & flameth on fyre; & in ther she brēneth her selfe, & of her ashes there is another fenyx engendred. This sayde lady Fenyce, wyfe to kynge Emendus, was quene, by enherytaunce, of the Clere Toure, the whiche was a noble ryche cyte. And by greate force she had subdued the cytye of Cōmeyne & of Cōstantinople, of Cornite, of Macedonye, of Phesale, of Boeme, & of all the coultre of Denmarche. She was a ryght hye & a mighty pryncesse, & right good & vertuous; so y^t it was harde than to haue founde ony ladye comperable to her. And so it fortyned in the freshe mery moneth of Maye, as at the feast of Pentecost, y^e kyng Emendus helde open courte at the cyte of Cornyte; at the whiche

feaste were these foure foresayd kynges, and al the seuen perres of his realme. And thys feast was great, & the courte ful of peple. And the fyrst day of this feaste the kyng Emendus was in his palays, lenyng on a rodde of golde y^t he helde in his hand ; & aboute hym stode these four kynges and his .vii. perres, accompanied also wyth the hye and myghty duke of Alatre, & .xxiiii. erles. And his noble quene Fenyce satte by hym, greate with chylde, & nere to her tyme of delyueraunce. And the kyng of Orquany behelde her well, who was her nere cosyn, & sayde : Madame, me thynke it sholde be metelye for youre grace, fro hensforth, to drawe to the place where as the kyng wyll y^t ye shall take your chābre ; for I thynke youre tyme approacheth on fast. In dede, fayre cosyn, said the quene, ye saye ryght truely : how be it, I knowe not as yet where as my lorde wyll I shall lye. And therto the kīg answered, & sayd : In dede as yet I am not determyned in what place she shall lye in. Than sayd the kyng of Mormall, who was a sage prynce : Syr, I wyll coūsayle you : let the quene lye at the Porte Noyr ; & whan she is delyuered, let the chylde be borne to the hyll of Aduentures. And, syr, yf ye do thus, I thinke ye shall do wysely. By my fayth, quod the kyng of Valefounde, I wote not what to say in this mater, whether it were better to bere the chylde thyther or not ; for this is youre fyrst chylde, and it is harde to tell what destynye the chylde shall be of ; yf it shall be good, than were it well done y^t it were borne thyder ; but peradventure y^e aduentures of this chylde maye be suche, that it were better they were hydde & kepte secrete, than to be openly knowen ; for in adventure lyeth often tymes as well yll as good. Well, quod the kyng Emendus, madame, I wyll that ye go to the Porte Noyre ; and whan that ye be delyuered, I wyll that the chylde be borne vp to the mount Perylous, there to knowe what destyny that the chylde shall be of.

CAP. XVIII.

THE DYSCRYPCION OF THE FACYON AND SYTUACYON OF THE
MOUNT PERYLOUS, THE WHICHE WAS CONQUERED BY THE
PROWES OF ARTHUR.

IN this moūte Perylous there was a castell named the Porte Noyre. This castell was ryght stronge and of grete surtye; and it was made & ordeyned by Proserpyne, who was on of y^e quenes of the fayry; & the cytuacyon of this castel was suche, that .x. legges of length there ranne a grete ryuer about the cyrcuyte of this castell, the whiche was soo depe fro the erth, and bākes so hye, that scante the water myghte be sene rennyng vnderneath; & it ranne soo rudely, that who so euer entred in to it was vtterly perysshed. It was blacker than smyth water, & it smelled abhominably. Also it was full of cuttyng and sharpe rockes swarmyng full of vermyn. This ryuer enuyronned this castell ouer all sydes; & ioyng to this ryuer there was all aboute this castell mountaynes so hye, that no creature coude mount vpon theym, neyther on horse nor on fote; and they were so bare and harde, that the byrdes, wyth gret payne, coude scant reyse, or get onye gresse or sustenance thereon. And among these mountaynes there was a passage of the largenesse of a charyot way, whereby one myghte go and enter into the castell. And in certayne places there were barbycanes that defended the entre fro al people. And vnder these mountaynes there was a grete marys, depe and foule, soo that none myght entre into it, but incontynent he was loste and peryshed. And there were pyttes of water innumerable, y^t it semed in a maner to be an arme of the see: howe be it, there was nother barke ne shyp that myght abyde it. And this mares was so depe, y^t it might well be thought that it attayned downe to the abysme and swalowe of the earth; the which mares endured well the largenesse of .ii. legges, wherein there was a passage of the bred of a spere length made by nygramancye, wheron

there were .xxx. drawe brydges. And so this mares enuyronned the castell ouer all partyes, and the mountaynes cyrcued the mares, and the ryuers the mountaynes; so that it was impossyble to be assaulted, besyged, or wōne. The castel also was closed w^t double walles made of chalke stone & sande, & grete barres and crampones of yren and stele fyxed in lede. The walles were .xv. fote thycke, & .xxxv. of heyghte, enuyronned wyth three hondred toures, cramponed and knyt togyder wyth gret chaynes of yren; & the barbycanes were bended & bordred wyth stele. To say the trouth, this castel of y^e Porte Noyr doubted not all the worlde. And in this castell were halles of vehement aduētūres, where as no creature myght entre wythout dethe; and manye knyghtes had be there peryshed, suche as toke on them to fordo the enchauntementes of that place. But, at the conclusyon, all suche there dyed & fynyshed there mortall lyues; for none coude neuer bryng the aduentures to an ende, saue alonely Arthur of Britayne, as ye shall after here. And before the gates of this castell, a lytle hyer on the hyl, there were palays, halles, and chambres, wyth grete & hye stronge batylmentes, where as foure kynges myght well haue bene harboured; and to these palays men myght go surely w^tout ony peryll; for thyder came all such as passed through the cōūtre. And out of this palays men myghte go to the mount of Aduentures, where as foure quenes of the fayry walked euery nyght, and did mucche hurte to them that came thyder agenst theyr wylles. And to this hyll acostomable these ladyes came nyghtly. The chyefe of them was called Proserpyne, a freshe yonge lady, & a fayre w^tout cōparyson; for yf all the beauties of al women in the worlde had ben assēbled togyder in to one personne, yet she shoulde not haue had the fourth parte of the beaute that Proserpyne was of, who was quene and ladye of the other thre, & was chyef lady of this castell of the Porte Noyr, & of the mount Peryllous, wher as she had pyght a ryche paulyon, with a splayed egle of golde in the toppe thereof; the whiche was the same egle that Arthur sawe in his dreame. And in a nother tent by was the whyte shelde of the fairye, and the good swerd named Clerence; the whych shelde was of suche force and myghte, that it coulde

not be hurte nor enpayred, neyther for iren nor stele, nor for none other thyng. The which shelde was ordained too healpe no creature, but all onelye hym that it was destenyed vnto. Nor the swerde shold not be pulled out of the shethe, nor healpe no man, but alonely by hym that it was predestynate vnto.

CAP. XIX.

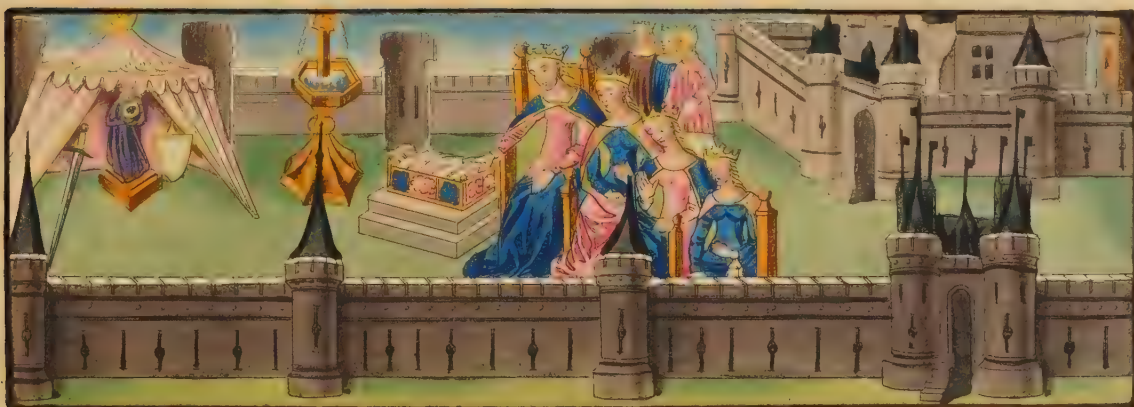
HOWE IT WAS DETERMYNED THAT THE QUENE FENYCE SHOULDE TAKE HER CHAMBRE IN THE PALAYS BESYDE THE CASTEL OF Y^e PORTE NOYRE.

So thus, as ye haue hearde before, the mighty kyng Emendus was agreed that Fenyce, hys quene, should lye a chyldebedde at the Port Noyre, and that her chylde shold be borne vp to the moūt of Aduentures. And he ordayned that the kyng of Orquanye, her cosyn germaine, shoulde go wyth her, and the archebysshoppe of Cornyte, who was brother to the kyng Emendus: and also the quene of Ismaelyte, and manye other ladyes & damoyelles, lordes and knyghtes, sholde accompanye thys quene Fenyce. And soo there they made to the kinges, and the .xii. perres of the realme, faythful assuraunce that they woulde make true reporte of euery thyng that they shoulde here or see in the mounte of Aduentures. And also y^e kyng Emendus and the twelue peres sware, and made faithful assuraunce, that what so euer sholde be destinied of that chylde, that they shoulde not wythstond in ony poynte the chilles desteney, but to kepe and to mayntayne the chylde lyke y^e sonne of a kyng. And of thys promyse there was made a charter, sealed by kyng Emendus, and by his twelue perres of hys realme; and was deliuered into the kepynge of the archebysshoppe of Cornyte. And soo by that time it was season to here masse. And whan the masse was fynyshe, the

tables were layde ; and ther they were serued ryght rychely, as it apertayned too the honoure of suche a noble kynge. And thys feeste and tryumphe endured the space of .xv. dayes. Than the kynge Emendus dyd gyue greate plente of golde and syluer, horse and harneys, to lordes and knyghtes, and euery persone after theyr degree ; and so euerye man repayred into there own countres, and the quene Fenyce prepayred al her besynesse for to remoue to the mounte Perillous. And so she toke her leue of the king, and toke wyth her all suche companye as ye haue hearde deuysed heare before, and laboured so longe in her iorney, that at the laste shee aryued at the Porte Noyre, and went to the palays before the gate of the castlle ; and there she remayned tyll by proces of tyme that she was brought a child bedde with a fayre doughter. Than the archebyshoppe toke the chylde vp in hys armes, and wente there wyth to the moūt Peryllous. And withe him was the kynge of Orquanye, and the quene of Ismaelit. And whan they were aboue on the hyll, they founde there a fayre and a goodlye grounde ; and sawe where there was a maruayllous fayre fountayne, rounde aboute the whyche there were sette foure ryche chayres ; and on euerye fountayne there was pyghte a pereon of stone, wherin there was ordayned a place for a child to lye in : in the whyche place they layd fayre and easely thys noble chylde. And than they with drewe theym selfe into a pryue place there by her, & se what shold fortune after. Than anone it began to waxe derke. And within a lytle space they sawe where there came foure the fayrest ladyes of the worlde, two and two together, wyth greate torches and lyghtes before them, and where al crowned with gold, like noble quenes. The first was so excellent fayre, that the beauties of the other thre were nothing to be compared to her, who was quene and lady ouer the other three ; and the castel of the Porte Noyr was perteyning to her, and also the fayre paulyon with the egle of golde, wherin was an ymage holding in her handes a chaplet made of pauncees ; the whiche ymage, in all poyntes, resembled to this faire quene Proserpine : wherin was also the white shelde and swerde enchanted. The whiche paulyon was not ferre pyght fro the fountayne where as this childe was layd in

Plate 5.

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Chas. Hoath direct



the pereon. And so than these foure quenes, wrapped in maun-
telles of silke, set them downe in the sayde foure chayres, and the
chylde was in the middes betwene them all foure.

CAP. XX.

HOW THAT THE DOUGHTER OF THE MYGHTY KYNGE EMENDUS,
AND OF FENICE HIS QUENE, WAS DESTYNED OUER THE FOUN-
TAIN IN THE HERBER OF THE MOUNTE PERILLOUS BY FOURE
QUENES OF THE FAYRY. THE CHYEFE OF THEYM WAS NAMED
PROSERPYNE, WHO WAS THE MOOSTE FAYREST CREATURE THAN
OF ALL THE WORLDE.

THAN this quene Proserpyne began first, and sayde : I perceyue
wel here is the doughter of our dere frēdes the kinge Emendus,
whome he hath sente hither to vs with greate triumphe : therfore
it is good reason that wee doe hym some good and pleasure. Ma-
dam, sayd the other thre quenes, begyn you, and we shall folow.
Certaynly, sayd she, with a right good wyll. Fyrst, I wyll y^e
this chylde be named Florence, and that she shall be floure of
beautie of all other creatures as longe as euer she shall liue. And
properly I wyl she shal resemble to me both in face, in body, in
countenaūce, in goinge, and commynge ; and in all other thynges
so lyke, that whoso euer se vs bothe together shall not consyder
nor dyscerne the one fro the other. And also to her I gyue thys
my castell of the Porte Noyr, and my paulyon, with the image
holdynge the chaplet ; and also my whyte shelde and swerde.
And therwith she helde her peace. And than the seconde quene
sayde : Madame, syth that ye haue made her to be fayre w^out
cōparyson, I wyl also that she shall be gracious and amyable.
Wel, quod the thyrde quene, syth I see that she shall be exceed-
inge fayre and gracious withoute comparison ; and, madame, seen

she shall haue your semblaunt, and your shelde & swerde, I wyll that the best knight of the worlde shall haue her in mariage. And I wyl that he shall bere the white sheld and the swerde, and that they shall helpe none other creature but alonely hym. And I wyl that he shall achyeue the aduentures of this castel, and shal put to death Malegrape the monstour. And to him I giue the sheelde and the swerde, & the chaplet y^t the ymage holdeth in the pauylion. And also I wyll that he shall haue this mayde Florence in maryage. Than the fourth quene sayd : Wel, syster, syth ye haue gyuen this mayde to the best knight of the worlde, I wil thā that yf any other be so bolde to take her, that incontinent he shal die or he haue power to touche her. And therwith all these quenes rose and wente there wayes. And than the quene of Ismaelite, & the kyng of Orqueny, and the archebysshop, toke the childe, and bare it to her mother ; and there openly recounted to her all y^t they had harde and seen of these quenes of the fayry. Than the archebysshop dyd chrysten this chylde, and gaue her to name Florence. And than the quene of Ismaelite, and the kinge of Orqueny, helde her on the founte ; the which childe was kept vp with foure norses. And she grew and amended dayly, so that she was towarde to be fayrest creature of y^e worlde. And whan the quene was purified, she wente to the citie of Sabba, where as the kynge Emendus was accompanied wyth his kinges, and the seuen peres of his realme. And this was at All-halowentyde, where as he kept a great open courte. And whan the quene was come, the king met her with great triumphe. And she was led to the palays w^t a king and an archebysshop ; and there openly recounted al the destyny of the childe, & how that she should be giuen in maryage to the best knight of al the worlde.

CAP. XXI.

HOW THE KINGE OF VALEFOUNDE SENTE HIS SON TO Y^e CITIE OF
SABBA FOR TO BE BROUGHT VP IN THE COMPANY OF FLORENCE.

IN this tyme the kinge of Valefoūde had a sone who was named Steuen, and he was sent to Sabba to be norysshed vp in the company of Florēce. And so these .ii. chyldren were brought vp togyther so longe til this childe Steuen coulde go to scole: than the king Emēdus sent hym to the scole of Athenes, there for to learne. And by processe of tyme thys childe there lerned so well & profoundly, that he became a souerayne clerke, specially in astronomy and nigromancy, that in no parte there coulde be founde none like him in conninge. Than the kynge Emendus dyd sende for hym to be in his court. Than Florence desyred of her father that he myght be her clerke, and of her counsayle: and the kīg w^t a right good wyll dyd graunte her request, and Florence loued him right wel, for he serued her right nobly and trulye, and she had after right great nede of him, as ye shal here more playnly whā time shal be to speke therof.

CAP. XXII.

HOW Y^t THE QUENE FENICE, MODER TO FLORENCE, DIED; & HOW
SHE MADE HER TESTAMENT, GIUINGE TO HER DOUGHTER A
RINGE, IN PUTTYNG HER THERBY IN POSSESSION OF THE
REALME OF BLAUNCHE TOURE.

THIS quene Fenice loued greatly her doughter Florēce, who was the mooste fayrest creature that as than coude be foūde in al the worlde. For there was none that euer saw her, but incontinent

they were rauysshed with her persaunt beaute. And the quene her moder kept her so derely, that there were but fewe men that had any sight of her: for y^e kynge her owne father saw her not so oft as he wolde haue done. In this maner she was kept tyll she was .xviii. yere of age. Than it fortunēd on a season that this king Emendus helde open courte at Pantopone, and to him were come al his other kinges and noble baronage; at which time the quene his wyfe was ryght sore dyseased of the feuer, and euerie day inpayred more and more; and so the seconde day of thys feast, thys noble quene Fenyce than as she lay in her bed, she saw where as her doughter Florēce stode sore wepyng before her beds side, wherewith she began to make a pitfull lamentacion, and sayd: A! dere doughter Florence, I haue kept and cherished you vnto this day with greate honour and ioie: and now is the season come y^t I must nedes leue you; and I fere me, y^t after my death ye shal haue nede of me.

And therewith she sente for the kynge Emendus her husbāde, and for other foure kinges, and for al the seuen peres of the realmes. And whan they were al come into her presence, she sayde to the king Emendus her husbāde: Right dere lord, I am sure it is not out of your remembraunce the destiny of our doughter Florence; therefore, syr, now in my last daies I humbly requyre you that ye wil kepe and vp holde the promise and othe as ye haue made in that behalfe heretofore, to the whiche ye are bounde to by your seale and wrytinge. And suffre her neuer to be giuen to other lorde in mariage but to him that she is predystinate vnto. In the name of God, quod the king, madame, I faythfully assure you to vp holde al that I haue promised. Well than, to you, syrs, quod the quene to y^e other kinges & vii. peres: How say ye, wyl ye all vpholde the same? & al they answered, y^t they wolde neuer agre to y^e cōtrary. Thā y^e quene toke a ringe of her finger, and openly she sayd: Florence, my fayre doughter, I giue you my realme of Blaūche Toure, and put you in sesenyng and possession therof by this ringe. And so Florence toke the ringe & deliuered it to the archebyssshop her vnclē to kepe. Thā the quene sayd to the king of Orqueney, and to the archebyssshop:

Fayre lordes, I leue in your kepinge my dere doughter Florence, praying you to kepe her well & truly : for, syr bysshop, she is your owne nese. And to you, syr king of Orqueny, she is cosyn and goddoughter, therfore ye ought to take good hede to her. And to you, my owne dere lorde and husbnde, & to all other, I humbly requyre pardō for any thinge that euer I haue trespaced agaynst any of you, besechinge you all to pray for my soule, and to the sauegarde of the blessed Trinite I you commit. And therwith she marked her with the signe of the crosse, and commended to God her spirite; and therwith lost her speche & mortall lyfe. Than began in the courte so great sorow and lamentacion, that it was pitie to behold and here, for the kīg foundred all in teeres, and al other that was there present. Than Florence stepped forth all in a rage, and piteously cried and sayd : Alas ! I sorowful and poore orpheline of moder syde. A herte ! why dost thou abyde any lenger in my woful bodie ? A ! dere lady & moder, howe is it that ye be thus gone & leue behynde you your sorowfull doughter Florence ? Therwith she wrange her lyly whyte handes, and sayde : Alas ! I sorowfull & desolate creature ! And therwith she wolde haue lepte and kyssed the dead corse of her moder ; but her herte fayled her, and so fel downe to the erthe in a deadly traunce. And euery body tooke so muche hede on there owne sorowes, so that no body toke hede of the wofull Florence, til at the last the archebyssshop & maister Steuen toke her vp in his armes, & so reuiued her, & bare her out of the sight of the dead corse : and than to her there came the abbes of our ladies monestery in that citie, and al her cōuent for to comforte her. And so these sorowful tidinges anone ranne ouer al the citie, wherfore all the belles in euery chyrche began to sound. And euery creature made great sorow for the deathe of the quene. And the king caused her bodi to be kept aboue the ground .xx. dayes, for to abyde the barons and knightes of the realme of Blaunche Toure for the entente that they should be at the entierment of theyr quene and lady.

CAP. XXIII.

HOW THAT THE QUENE FENICE, MODER TO FLORENCE, WAS
NOBLY ENTIERED.

ABOUTE the ende of .xx. days theyr came a knight to kinge Emendus fro the emperour of Inde the More, who had hearde tidinges, howe that the quene Fenice was departed this transitorie life, and he desyred the kinge to prolonge foure dayes lenger the entermēt of the quene; for he sente worde that he wolde be with him by that season; wherof kinge Emendus was very glad, that so hie a person as the emperour was, wolde take on him for to be at the beryenge of the quene his wyfe. And whan the day came of his comyng, he was receiued ful right honourabli, and thā the seruyce was ministred to the deade bodie ful right hie and solempnely, and so she was layde in the cathedral chirch of all the citie. And thys emperoure abode there styll a greate space afterwarde wyth the kynge, to the entente to putte hym of his great sorow. And all other kinges, erles, & barons, departed euery man into his owne coūtrei. And also the archebisshop retorned to Cornite, and so toke his leue of the king his broder, and led with him Florence his nese. And also Florence toke leue of the king her fader, and of the emperour, who was as than all bedewed with weping, and not araied as pertained to her estate, but after the maner of a sorowful mornor. How be it, in suche state as she was in, she was of great beaute, wherby this emperour was stricken with so great ioy that he lost al his coūtenaūce. And fro hensforth he loued & desyred so muche Florence, that he thought on nothing but alonely on her. And thus departed Florence w^t the archebisshop her vnclē, & trauailed so longe til at the last she ariued at Cornite on a Friday about the houre of euensong time, & there was receyued honourably, and there remayned a great season. And mayster Steuen euer serued her wel and truely, and she trusted more in him than anye other after the death of the quene her moder.

CAP. XXIV.

HOW THAT THE EMPEROUR OF INDE THE MORE DEMAUNDED OF KYNGE EMENDUS THE FAYRE FLORENCE HIS DOUGHTER IN MARIAGE, AND OF THE ANSWERE THAT KINGE EMENDUS MADE TO HYM; AND ALSO OF THE TERME THAT WAS TAKEN TO MARY FLORENCE: AND HOW THAT MAYSTER STEUEN KNEWE, BY THE REGARDYNG OF THE PLANETTES, THAT THEYR WAS COMMYNGE OUT OF THE WEST A KNIGHT, WHO SHOULD ACHEUE THE ADVENTURES OF THE PORTE NOYRE, AND HOW HE SHOULD HAUE AND ENIOYE THE WHITE SHELDE AND THE SWERDE, AND OBTAYNE FLORENCE IN MARYAGE: WHEREOF SHE WAS GREATLY COMFORTED, FOR IN NO WISE SHE LOUED THE EMPEROUR.

THUS the emperour abode styll wyth the kinge Emendus, and departed together fro Pantopone and wente to Masedone; but euer the emperour was in great trouble and thought, for the loue that he had in Florence; soo that the kinge Emendus demaunded of hym what he eyled to be so sad. And the emperour answered, and said: Syr, I shal tel you the trouthe, for I can not sende to you a more certayne messenger than I am my selfe, for ye must beleue myne saying rather thā any other meane messenger. Syr, it is of trouthe how that ye be a great prynce and of right greate power; and also, syr, it is wel knowen how that my strength is not smal: for I thik as now we two ar in maner the greatest men that reygne in anye place of the worlde. Therefore it is a great welth to vs to continue together as faythful frēdes. And truly, fro hensforthe, I wyll be your frende and your louer. Certaynlye, syr, it is so, I am a man to marye, and I thynke I cannot set mi loue in no place so well and nobly as on Florence your doughter: therefore, syr, here with mine owne mouth I desyre you to haue her in mariage. A, syr! quod the king, it may not be, for she maye haue none other mariage but suche as she is desteyned vnto; for yf that anye other

presume to take her, he is but vtterlye loste and dead. And also I haue sworne and set to my seale to vpholde her destinie, and neuer to breake it. Syr, sayde the emperour, beleue you then of suche fantasies as is the fayry? Surely, syr, they haue no power nor might; but I requyre you gyue me your doughter, and soo wee shal be togither as frēdes. Truly, syr, said y^e king, I wil be glad therof: but I promysed to my quene to kepe faythfullye the promys that I had. In the name of God, sayd the emperour, syr, your queene is dead & past, who shall neuer retorne agayne; she shal neuer demaunde nor sew you for the brekyng of anye couenaunte made to her, & theyr is none other y^t wil be so hardy to reprove your dede: for yf they do they shal lese theyr heades: wherfore, syr, I requyre you fulfyll my desyre, and than ye shall binde me to be youre faythfull frende. Wel, syr, quod the kinge, yf my doughter be content therewyth, it shall please me right wel: wherfore let vs ride to morow towarde Cornyte, and speke wyth her, and know her minde in thys mater. So be it, in the name of God, quod the emperour.

And on the nexte day be tymes they lept on theyr horses, & rode forth to Cornite, and rode so longe, that on a Wednesday they arriued at the citie of Cornite, & so went to the palais. Than the archebyssshop came to se the kinge, and brought with hym Florence. And than they all together wente vp in the palays, & entred into a fayre chambre. Than the emperour and the kyng set them downe together, and betwene them the fayre Florence. And at the laste the king Emendus sayd: Fayre doughter, your moder is departed thys lyfe, & it is now tyme that fro hensforth that I prouyde for your noble estate; ye be a great lady and a puyssaunt. Therefore I wyl mary you to this noble emperour here present. And whan Florence hard her father speke to her of mariage, all her blode begā to quake and trimbil, for she hated the emperour euer sith the begynning of her youth: how be it, she answered ryght wysely, and sayd: Dere lord and father, ye know wel that it is not yet .iii. monethes sith the death of my lady my moder: and yf I should mary me so newlie, I shold be greatly blamed. Therefore, syr, I requyre you let this yere passe, thā, syr, I wil take cōsayle &

tell you what I wil do. And whā the emperour hard her speke so reasonably, he coude not endure to charge her any ferther as than, and acorded to abide the terme of her desyre: and behelde wel how that she chaūged colours and sore trembled, & so dyd the kinge her father also. How be it, he made no semblaunt. And so they were together a longe season, till at the laste she toke licence of them and departed into her owne chambre sore amased, and so abode tyll the archebyssshop and mayster Steuen were comen fro the courte.

And as sone as they were entred into the chābre of Florēce, they saw well where as she was sitting, sore sighing and wepinge. Than the bisshop toke her by the hand, & demaunded of her why she made that lamentacion. As helpe me God, vncle, sayde Florence, my lorde my fader kepeth not well the couenautes that he made to my lady my moder, for now he is in the mynde to marye me vnto thys emperour: and there is no thinge that I hate so muche as I do hym. Certaynlye I had rather to suffre death than to haue him; and I haue no lenger respyte thā the ende of this yere. Why, madame, quod mayster Steuen, haue ye purchased so longe a respyte? In fayth, I faythfully ensuyre you, that I wyll gyue you two yere lenger, for I waraunt you, that two yere after your daye ye shall not be married to him. Mayster, sayd Florence, I thanke you of your good cōforte. Wel, quod the bysshop, the emperour dothe foly to demaūde you agaynst your wyl: for, perauenture, there may fortune lytle good come to hym therby. Than the bysshop toke her by the hande, and ledde her into a fayre gardyne to sporte her.

And so on a fayre grene benche she satte her downe, betwene the bysshop & mayster Steuen, and soo passed the tyme w^t many goodli sportes. And than it began to waxe late, and the euenynge was very clere, and the sterres shone ful bryght. Than mayster Steuen dyd beholde thē a grete space, and at the last he said: Madame, for certayne I knowe by the course of the planettes, that there is a knyght comynge in to this countre, and is now well onwarde on his waye, who shall achyue the aduentures of the castell of the Porte Noyr or this yere be passed. And surely it is he that shall haue

the whyte shyelde and the swerde Clarence. Verelye, sayd the byshop, yf this be of trouthe, the emperoure maye goo fysshe in an other place, for here he hathe well fayled; for I am sure it is the same knyght that my lady Florence is predestynate vnto; therefore I am ryghte joyous of the hurte of the emperour. And howe saye you, mayster, do you not hate hym? Yes, syr, thereof he may be as sure, as that an ell of clothe wyll make his hede a hode: whereat the bysshop dyd laughe. And thus they were longe togyder in this talkynge, tyll it was season to go to rest. Thā they brought Florence to her chambre, and departed to theyr owne lodgynges, and aboute mydnyght this lady awoke. And thā fell into her remembraunce the dyspleasure that she had to the emperoure, and as she was thus thynkyng, she behelde the foure mortees of waxe y^t stode brennyng before her beddes fete: therwyth she sawe where there came in to the chambre a fayre lady whyte as the lylly, with a mantell of grene hangynge aboute her sholders w^t a lase of golde, and a crowne of golde on her heade, and she helde an other lady by the hande, and sayde vnto her: Fayre syster, sawe you not well the leoparde with the seuen heades all crowned wyth golde, who hath the loke of a brim bore, and the herte of a lyon; the body armes of lede, & the fote of a whyte harte? And whan she had thus sayde, the other lady demanded of her what all thys myghte meane; for herein are dyuerse thinges to be consydered. Than she answered, and sayd: Syster, this leoparde shall haue the eagle of golde that is on my paunylyon, & by hym shall the gates be opened of my castell of the Porte Noyr; and than shall all the enchauntementes fayl. And therewyth bothe these ladyes vanysshed awaye, so that Florence wyste not where they were sodaynly become: wherwyth she was righte sore afrayed, for she wyst not what it myght meane. In lyke case, the same vysyon came the self night to the archebyshop, and also to mayster Steuen, where as they laye seuerally eche fro other; wherof they had grete meruayle what theyr dreame myghte sygnyfy. And within a lytle space after the lyghte of the daye began to apere, than the archebyshop rose, and mayster Steuen also, to do theyr attēdaūce on theyr lady. And whan it was tyme

to synge masse, mayster Steuen wente fro Florēce, who was than redy apparayled, and so wente to churche. And there the archebysshop songe masse; and whan it was fynished the bysshop saluted Florence, & demaunded what good reste she had taken that nyght paste. As God helpe me, dere vncle, sayd Florence, neuer as yet came to me suche a fortune as dyde this nyghte; nor I was neuer soo afrayde: for aboute mydnyght I awoke, and as I laye wakyng, I sawe properly before my bedde the moost fayreste figure of a lady that euer I sawe, and she had a crowne of goulde on her heade, and be semyng there was an other quene in her companie crowned in lyke wyse, who was also, as me thoughte, a very fayre lady, but nothyng to the regarde of the other quene. And suche wordes me thought she sayd vnto her felowe.

And there Florence recounted worde for worde as ye haue harde here before, of all herre hole vysyon, and howe that they were so daynely vanysshed awaye fro her. And whan the byshoppe hearde thys, he sayde: A! fayre nese Florence, by the faith that I owe vnto you, euē in like case as ye saye, it fortunēd to me thys same nyght: & for certayne I thoughte properly it had ben you; for, by my soule, the quene that I sawe, yf yee were bothe togyther, I coude not dyscerne the one fro the other, ye resemble soo nere together. In the name of God, sayde mayster Steuen, thys vysyon appered also properlye to me, in euery thyng as ye haue rehersed; and verely also I thought it had ben my ladye Florence heare present. Verelye, sayde the bishop, thys thinge is not thus fortunēd to vs all thre wythout some reson: mayster, I requyre you go loke what significacion it may be of. Thā the mayester wente frome theym and entred in to hys chābre, and toke his bokes, and loked on thys mater so longe tyl he perceyued fynally the mystery thereof. And so came agayne to Florence, and sayd to the bysshop: Syr, let vs set our hertes in joye and rest, for verely my lady heare nedeth not to care for the emperoure as in beyng of her husbāde, for there is an other free knyght, swet and fayre, who is the foūtayne of all chyualry, for hys prowes surmounteth & shall do all other. Therefore know for certaine, that where as the vision shewed vs howe that out of the west

shold come a leopard, y^e which signifieth a gentyll knyghte borne about the countree of Fraunce; and where as this leoparde hath the loke of a bore, & the herte of a lyon, in lykewise, this knight is the hardiest y^t euer was boorne. And where his bodi shold be of stele, betokeneth that there is no knyght so stronge & harde to abyde a brounte as he is: and where it is sayd y^t his armes be of leed, the which is a heuy thinge, betokeneth the heuy strokes of this knight, the which cānot be susteyned. And as for the fete of the hart, the whyche is a lyght beest & a myghty; in like case, thys knyght is stronge & lyghte, & quycke to go towarde hys enemyes. And where as he shall haue the egle, y^e whiche is souerayne & kynge of all foules: in like forme, this knyght shall haue my lady Florence, who is quene & souerayne of al beaute & rychesse aboue all quenes of the worlde; the which shal be the confusion of the emperour of Inde. And where as he bereth .vii. hedes crowned w^t golde, sygnyfieth that this knight shal bere the crownes of .vii. kingdōes, the which he shal cōquere wyth his swerd. And where as that y^e gates of the castel of the Port Noyre shall be opened by him, and that al the enchaūtements shal than fayle, representeth the hye prowes of him that shal bere doune al the aduentures of the Port Noyre: & surely thys is the signyficacyon of oure hole dreame or vysyon. Therfore it is necessarye y^t I repayre to the palais of the Port Noyre, to knowe whan this knight cōeth, and too see, by hys estate, what maner a manne he is. Verely, sayd the byshoppe, I alowe well that ye soo do, as ye haue deuised, & that ye remoue thitherwarde as hastily as ye can. And whan Florēce herde tydynges of thys knyght, she was sodaynely striken w^t so grete loue, that fro that houre forwarde she gaue vnto him her herte. Thus she loued hym truely, & wyst not how; and Arthur loued the egle, & as than had neuer seen it. So than thys lady Florence made grete feste and joye al that daye.

And the nexte daye, betymes, mayster Steuen arose, & prepared for his departynge; and than he toke lycence of kyng Emendus to go to the castel of the Porte Noyre, for maters perteynyng to hys ladye Florence, and the kyng gaue him

leue. Than the maister came to Florence, and to the byshop, and toke leue of them: and so than Florence toke hym by ere, and sayde: Gentyll mayster, if yonder knyght come to the Porte Noyre, brynge him to me, if it maye be possible, for verily I haue grete wyll to se hym, & know of his estate. Madame, sayde the mayster, w^t a ryghte good wyll, if I can brynge it aboute. And so departed, and foure other knyghtes wyth hym, and rode so longe, that on a Saterdaye he came too the Porte Noyre, and toke his lodgyng at the palais without the castle gate: for ther was none that entred into the castle without deth. And so in thys palais this mayster Steuen remayned a greate season, nye a hole yere.

Now let vs leue too speake of the mayster, and Florence, and of the courte of kyng Emendus, & of the emperoure of Inde: And nowe let vs retorne to Arthur and his company.

CAP. XXV.

HOW THAT ARTHUR SLEWE TWELUE KNIGHTES, WHO HAD TAKEN AWAYE A YONGE DAMOYSELL FRO HER FATHER AND MOTHER; & HAD TYED HER TO A TREE, THERE TO HAUE DEFOULED HER VYRGINITYE; WHO WAS SAUED BY ARTHUR.

ARTHUR, Hector, & Gouvernar, were rydyng, after they departed fro the court of the duke his fader, .xv. daies, without abiding in any place, or fyndinge of onye aduentures, wherof ony mencion is made: and rode so long, that at the last they came in to the countre of Denmark, & entred into a grete thycke couerte, the which endured a grete space: & at the last they founde a grete stange or water, & a fayre grene medowe joynyng therto; the which conteyned the space of two myles & a halfe: and so they rode styll by the syde of the medowe, fynally in the botome of a grete valey. Than the espyed a stronge toure, closed w^t myghty

walles. And Arthur sawe wel howe the gates of the place were open; and soo they lyghted of there horses, and entred into the toure, and wente vp into the hall, & all the way they founde no creature; wherof they had grete meruayle: &, at the last, Arthur harde the voyce of a woman in a lytle chambre besyde hym, who cryed ryghte pyteously, and sayd: A! lady vyrgyn Mary! helpe me, and send me som maner of socour! And therewith Arthur lept into the chambre, & there found a right fayre lady, who had ben drawen all aboute the chambre; and her yelowe heere drawen and cutte of her heade; and she was so sore beten, y^t she had no power to helpe her selfe. And in this chambre there stode a table redy couered, wherreon there stode wyne and met gret plēte; wherof Arthur had grete meruayle, and demaunded of the ladye, who it was that had done so moch trouble and shame. And whan the lady saw Arthur, & herde hym speake, she was sore abasshed, and all afrayde, sayd: A! gentyll knyght, I requyre you doo me no more hurte, for I haue harme ynoughe all ready. Fayre lady, sayd Arthur, be nothinge afrayde, for I wyll warraunt and defēde you fro all enemyes; therefore shewe vnto me who hath thus entreted you. Than wyth moche payne the lady rose vpō her feete, and sayde: Syr, as God helpe me, there departed fro hens ryghte now .xii. knyghtes all armed, & they haue thus pyteously arayed me, as ye se. And I thynke they haue slayne my lorde my husbonde; and haue away w^t them my dere doughter, to defoule her virgynyte, yf God doo not pouruey some remedy for her. Well, fayre lady, quod Arthur, where is the lord of this place? Syr, I cannot saye whether he be alyue or dead; I beseche you seke aboute for him; for I thike I shall finde hī other quycke or dead. Than Arthur soughte all aboute the place. And at the last, in a lytle house, he founde hym, & his handes bound behynde his backe, sore wounded in the head & on the sholders. Than Hector dydde lose his handes, & Gouvernar dyd serche his woundes; & Arthur demaunded hym, why he was so delt w^t. Syr, in good fayth, quod the knyghte, I knowe none other cause, but y^t the laste day there was a straunger dyd ouerthrowe the mayster of the sayd .xii. knyghtes: wherfore, thus

they haue arayed we withoute cause, & they haue ledde awaye my doughter, to do her shame and velany. And as they thus talked togyder, the lorde of the place sawe where his squyer & clerke lay dead, wherof he had grete ruth. Well, quod Arthur, this is a grete outrage: come on frendes, get vs our harneys. And whan they were all armed, they folowed after these knyghtes, and rode so longe, tyll at the laste they found the cheyf mayster of them, at the enterynge into a fayre forest, who was besy about this damoyzell to haue fyled her. Than Arthur descried him, and sayd: A! yll & shameful knight, not so hardy y^t thou ones touche her; for I ensure thou shalte come to her fader in the spyte of thi herte, to the entente y^t he shall take vègeaunce of thy trespas: and therefore I the defye.

Therw^t he & all his company lept on theyr horses, & the capytayne of theym broched his horse agenst Arthur, & stroke him so rudely, that he brake his spere to his fyste; but Arthur stroke hym so puyssauntly, that his speare heade entred clene throughe his body, wherew^t he fell downe deade to the earthe. Than Arthur drewe out hys swerde, & smote the seconde soo feruently that he perced hys hert. And the third he stroke so, that he cut hym downe to the sadel. And fro the .iiii. he toke his hed fro the sholders. And Hector, for his parte, stroke one of them so rudely, that he entred hys spere into hys body more than a fote. And than he toke his swerde, and stroke amonge them so rudely, that he made them al before him to knele. And also Gouvernar made .ii. of theyr heades to flee into the felde. And whan the remnaunt sawe that their companye were thus delate wythall, they toke them to flyght for drede of dethe. And as they fledde, they sayde eche to other: Let vs saue oure selfe fro these deuyls of hell, for they be none erthelye creatures. And soo Arthur folowed theym no ferther, but came to the damoyzell, where as shee was fast bounden to a tree, and dyd lowse her, and caused her too mounte on a horse of one of the knyghtes that was slaine; and than brought her agayne to her fader. And whan he sawe hys doughter, his herte reuyued, and kneled downe before Arthur, and rendred to him many gret thankyngs. Than Arthur toke him vp

by the hande, and so remayned there all y^r daye and nyghte : and the nexte mornynge he and all hys company toke leue of theyre hoost, and of the damoyssel, who loued Arthur wyth all her herte. And so they departed and entered in to theyr journey, & rode forth so longe, tyll they cam in to the countree of Vienne ; where as they met a messenger hauynge by semyngre grete haste, wyth a jauelyn in his hande, & scochen of armes on his breste, and a boget wyth leteers hangyng at his sadel bow. And there Arthur curteysly dydde salute hym. Syr, sayde the verlet, God gyue you ryght good aduentur. Good frende, quod Arthur, to whome do you pertayne ? Syr, I dwell with my lorde the Erle of Beauiewe. Gentyll frende, quod Arthur, can ye tell vs onye nouelles ? Syr, I can not tell yf ye knowe ony thyng of the torney that my lorde of Beauiewe hath taken agenst the Marshal of Myrpoys, the whiche shall be holden on the Monday nexte after holy rode daye. Is it of a trouthe, good frende, quod Arthur, that the Erle of Beauiewe hath taken on hym this enterpryse ? Ye, syr, w^out fayle. And good frende, I praye you, what maner of man is youre lorde ? Syr, as God helpe me, he is a noble man, for the Erle of Forestes is his vncle, and the Erle of Mount Belyale is his cosyn germaine ; and as of hym selfe, he is as curteys, as gentyll, as free, and as meke as a doue. But the Marshall of Myrpoys is contrary, for he is fyers and cruell, and a dyuerse man to dwell w^oll : how be it, he is a good knight of his handes, & is of that hardynesse, & of so fyers a courage, that he fereth nothyng thre or foure knyghtes, to fyght agenst them all ; wherfore my lorde dooth puruey him of the best knyghtes that he can gette ; therefore he hath sente me to a knyght of his who is reputed ryghte valiaunt and sage, & well proued in dedes of chyualry, who is named syr Delalaunde. Good felowe, I praye you, how farre dwelleth the knyghte hens ? Syr, his house passeth not two leges fro this place : wherfore, fayre lordes, yf ye thynke to be wel harbored this nyght, by my counsaile gette you to a litell castell here by the which is called Rochebyse, wherein there is a valyaunt and a ryche aun-cyent knyghte : therfore, siers, the best that ye can do is to repayre thyder, for this forest is dangerous to passe throughe ; the wayes be

soo dyuers, that it is harde to kepe the ryght way w^toute a gyde, and specyally be nyghte; and as now it begynneth to waxe very late. Well, good frende, quod Arthur, I thanke you for youre good wyll; kepe on youre jornaye, and God sende you good aduenture: and we shal do as well as God wyl suffer vs. And so the verlet departed, and wente to the knyghte syr Delalaunde & dyd his message, & delyuered hym his letters to the Erle of Beauieu.

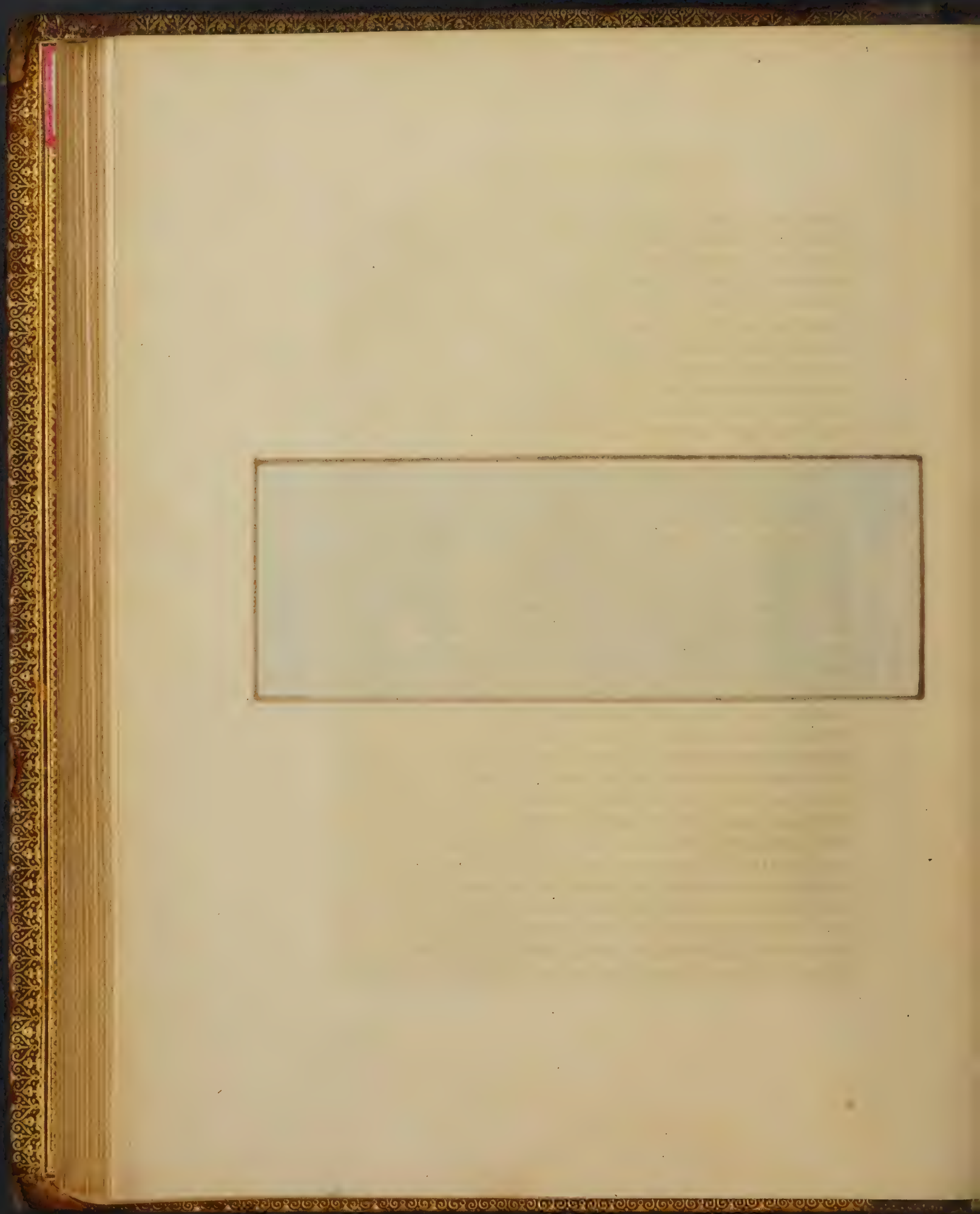
CAP. XXVI.

HOW THAT ARTHUR, HECTOR, & GOUERNAR, SLEWE .XXX. THEUES IN A GRETE FOREST; THE WHICHE WAS A GRETE WELTH TO ALL THE COUNTRE, FOR THEY HAD PYLLED AND WASTED THE COUNTRE ALL ABOUTE.

AND whan Arthur was departed fro the varlet, he & his company rode so long, tyl they entred ito the same foreste that the varlet had shewed theym of before, and rode all the daye & coude fynde no house, nor mete, nor drynke for them, nor for theyr horses; and than it began to waxe late. And in this forest acos-
tomable there dydde repayre .xxx. theues, who dyd robbe all aboute where as they coude gette ony praye; so that no creature durst stere nor passe through the countree, and specially throughe y^e forest, if it were ony thyng late. And so by fortune these theues encountred the stuffe & caryages perteynyng to Arthur and hys company: and incontynent they toke al the stuffe, & dyd bette and iltrete theym that were conductours therof; tyll, at the laste, Jacket, Arthurs squyre, drewe his swerde, and to hys power dydde helpe & ayed to defende his maysters stuffe; but they were so many on hym that he was sore wounded. And therwyth Arthur & hys company came to them. And whan Arthur espied his seruaunt Jacket sore wounded and in great ieoperdy, he drew his swerde, and stroke so the fyrste that he claue his hed

downe to the chynne. And fro the seconde he stroke of the head ; and fro the thyrde he share clene awaye the sholders w^t the arme. And than Hector and Gouvernar ryght strongly layd on euery syde amonge these theues. And so, by the helpe of Arthur, they slewe and kylled all that euer were before theym : and they were all dead. Than Arthur commaunded to serche for his people, where as they were wont to resort vnto. And so thus by the prowes of these thre knightes, these .xxx. theues were brought to deth and confusion. And at the last they founde a fayre ancient man vnder a tre, lienge all naked, bounde faste with two cheynes, so that he could not help himself. Than Arthur dyd louse him, and gaue hym all the abymentes that was on the dead bodyes of the sayde .xxx. theues : wherfore the good man humbly thāked Arthur, and specially for sauynge of hys lyfe.

Than Arthur and his cōpany rode forth, and trauayled so long, til at the last they founde a stronge house, and knocked so longe at the gate tyll there came to them a verlet, bare legged, redy to go to bed, for all other in the place were as than gone to theyr restes : and than this foresayde varlet demaunded of theym, who it was that knocked so fast at the gate that time of night. Good freende, quod Gouvernar, it is a knyght, that wold fain this night haue lodgyng for hym & hys cōpany. Syr, sayd the varlet, if it please you to tary, I wyll go speake with my lorde and mayster, and shew hym your mynde : how be it, I thinke he be now at his rest, for he is olde & ancient, and hath ben in his dayes a very good knight, & as yet he is glad to here speking of good knightes, & loueth them that haunteth noble dedes of armes ; & therwith y^e varlet departed, & went to his master, & said : Syr, there is at your gates .iii. knightes armed, and are, be semyng, goyng to Vienne to the tornay : and they desyre, by way of gentillesse, this one nightes lodgyng. How saye ye, syr, shall I open to them the gates ? Hie the a pace, quod the lorde, for I am not content that thou hast made them to tary without so long ; and whā they be entred, come agayne to me, and bring me worde what maner of mē y^t they be, and what harneys and armes they bere. Than the varlet went agayne to the gate & set it wide open, and suffred Arthur & his cōpany to entre,



whereof they had great nede. Than the varlet behelde Arthur, & saw wel that he was like a gentilman, being long & wel fornysshed, & meruaylously fayre, aboue al his company. And next him he sawe Hector, who was ryght fayre, hie, & well made. And also he behelde Gouvernar, who was in al poyntes like a mā bigge and browne of coloure. And also he perceyued wel how all theyr harneys were fayre and ryche. Thā was there torches brought forth, & varlets ranne for theyr horses. Than the first varlet returned agayne to his lorde, and sayd: Syr, syth y^t I was borne I neuer sawe so goodlye knightes as they be, & specially the chief of thē; & as for theyr armour it is bothe fayre & ryche: for, I ensure you, it should seme that they be right greate men, and comen of a noble lygnage. Wel, quod the lorde, loke that thou in al haste apparayle theyr lodginge; and see that they be serued right honourably. Well, syr, quod the varlet, it shal be done incontinent. Than the lorde sayd to the lady his wife, who was as than lyenge a bed by him: Madame, by reason of your honour and gentylnesse, ye should ryse and kepe companie with yonder noble knightes: for I thinke they be some greate men; for it shall greatly anoye them, and they se not the chyefe of the house to make thē some chere: for, as God helpe me, I wolde haue great ioye to speake w^t them, yf I might aryse and not hurt myself; therfore, madame, in myne absence, I pray you go & make to them the best chere that ye canne. Syr, sayde the lady, with a right good wil, syth it please you, I shall so do. Than this ladye rose, and apparayled her selfe ryght fresshly, who was a ryght fayre yonge lady of the age of .xxi. yere. And whan Arthur and Hector saw her, they rose, & curteysly eche of them dyd salute other, and she sat her downe betwene theym. Than Arthur sayde: Madame, ye haue taken a great payne to leue the cōpany of your lorde, to come to se vs. Syr, it pleaseth my lorde that I shal do so: and, therfore, I am come to you in the stede of hym; for he wold, wyth a right good wyl, haue come to you hym selfe, yf he myght so haue doone: but, syres, he is ansient, and it wolde sore anoye him to haue broken his reste. And so thus they talked of dyuerse thinges. And in the meane season there was

mete prouided for them, and than the tables were spred & couered, & so than they washed, and sat thē downe, Arthur & the lady together, & Hector & Gouvernar: but Hector had his eyen on the lady, and did neyther eate nor drynke; the whiche Arthur & Gouvernar right wēl espied. Thā Arthur sayd to hym: Frende, it is yours, al y^t ye se. Syr, sayd Hector, I haue seen some thinges of y^e which, yf I might, I wolde fayne be mayster. A! Hector, quod Gouvernar, a manes will ought euer to folow the ordre of reason; and so, I beleue, ought yours to do. And therewith they lefte these wordes: howe be it, all that lytle or nothinge refrayned Hectors looke, for alwayes styll he behelde this lady tyll it was tyme for thē to go to theyr restes: and so they toke their leues of the lady, and thanked her for the great chere that she had made theym.

And on the nexte day betymes they departed, & entred into the forest. The morninge was fayre, and clere, and warme, for it was as than aboute the ende of Apryl. So these lordes rode forth in gret joy, tyll at the last Gouvernar sayde to Hector: Syr, was your wyl accōplysshed this last night, where as ye sayd ye wold gladlye fulfille youre wyll? To saye the trouth, I thinke your wyll was on our hostes, who was both fayre and yonge. By my fayth, quod Hector, I wold haue ben right glad to haue fulfilled my wyl with her, for vndoubted she is fayre and gracyous, and I loue her with all my herte. And, syr, what was your wil? quod Gouvernar. By my fayth, sayde Hector, y^t she should haue ben all night in myn armes, & I in hers. Now, truly, syr, sayd Gouvernar, y^t wil was neyther good nor honest, for it was against reasō; for y^e good lorde her husbād did cause her to rise frō him, to the entente to honour vs and to kepe vs company; remēbring also, how honestly she receyued vs, & so good chere as we had of her. And, syr, wolde you haue than done velanye to y^e good lorde, as to haue hadde hys wyfe vnto his dishonoure in hys owne house? By the fayth that I owe vnto God, it hadde not ben well doone, nor yet it was none honest thoughte. A! syr Gouvernar, quod Hector, I am sure ye be so sage in scyence y^t ye wyl do no foly; wysdome is greate if the cat neuer touched mylke; as much to say

as, whā loue toucheth, wysedome is than oftentimes ouercome. Well, as for al that, quod Gouvernar, it maketh no mater; but yet I say as I sayde, y^t it would not haue ben wel done of a gentylmā to haue doone as ye saye; for it were rather treason so to do; wherw^t Hector began to be sore chafed, & sayde: What! Gouvernar, sayst thou that I am a traytour? Thou liest falsely, I was neuer none! and drew nere to Gouvernar, and layd his hand on his swerde. Than sayd Gouvernar: Stryke me not. I saye not that ye be a traytoure, nor ye be not so great a man that youre noblenesse forthynketh me, for I wolde ye were greater than ye are: yet for all y^t I say, that this dede accordinge to youre wysshe had ben treason, rémembryng y^e trust and confidence that the good lorde had in vs, and in the coloure thereof, to haue taken his wyfe to hys dishonour; surely, I say, it is no thought of a noble mā. Wyth the which wordes Hector was so chafed, and drewe his swerde, & stroke Gouvernar on the helme so rudely, that he was therwyth sore astonyed: wherewith Arthur was sore dyspleased, and blamed greatli Hector therefore. And thā Gouvernar sayde: Syr, stryke me no more, for by the fayth that I owe to our lorde, yf ye doo, I wyl not pardon you; for ye shall haue as good as ye brynge: how be it, as for that ye haue done, I wyl suffre it for the honoure here of my lord Arthur, and for the great lygnage that ye be of. Why, good syr, quod Hector, what wolde ye do elles, any great hurte, that shall be soone seene? and so stroke Gouvernar agayne on the helme a great blowe; wherw^t Gouvernar drew his swerde, & rudelye stroke Hector on the helme, for he was a good knight: and so there began a great & a sore batayle betwene these two knightes. And Arthur dyd his payne wyth fayrenesse to depart them; but they were so sore dyspleased and chafed eche wyth other, that Arthur coud in no wyse cause them to leue. And whā Arthur saw that, he drewe his swerde & stroke Hector so rudely, that he made him to stoupe down to y^e necke of his horse; & with an other stroke, he stroke Gouvernar so sore, that he was sore astonied therewith, & nie had fallen fro his horse; & than Arthur wolde haue recouered on him a nother stroke, but Gouvernar went from hym. Than Arthur came to Hector, and wolde haue stryken at him agayne: but than Hector

sayd : Cosyn, what wyl ye doo, are ye dyspleased with me ?
Ye, veryly, sayd Arthur, ryght sore : for Gouvernar shewed to you
your folye, and ye therfore haue stryken hym here in my presence,
wherof I am not content. Syr, sayde Hector, I repente me : but
he dyspleased me sore, y^t I coude not refrayne my selfe as at that
tyme. Well, quod Arthur, nowe than fro hensforth be in peace,
or by the faythe that I owe to my lorde my father, the fyrst of
you that beginneth shal lese my cōpany, and also my good wyl
for euer : therfore, come on Gouvernar, and make amēdes vnto my
cosyn Hector, in y^t ye haue stryken him. Syr, sayde Gouvernar,
wyth a ryght good wyl. Than he put of hys helme, & desyred
Hectors good wyl. Now, cosyn Hector, quod Arthur, make ye
hym amēdes. Syr, sayd Hector, right gladly ; for it forthinketh
me greatly the displeasure y^t hath ben betwene vs : & so he dyd
also of his helme. And there eche of thē kyssed other, and so
entred forthe into there jorney ; & rode forthe so longe, tyl the were
passed the forest. And than they sodaynly encountred the knight
syr Delalaunde, and the messenger that they had met with the day
before ; and there eche of them did salute other. Than syr Dela-
launde demaunded of Arthur into what parties he wolde drawe
hym vnto. Certaynly, sayd Arthur, it hathe ben shewed me that
at holy rode tyde nexte commynge, there shoulde be at Vienne a
greate assemble of noble men and good knightes. Therfore I am
ridynge thytherwarde to se that noblenesse, and to be acqueynted
wyth some of the good knightes that wyl be there. Truly, sayde
syr Delalaund, it is of trouth that there shall be a great assemble
of noble knightes, for there shall be a great tornay. I pray you,
syr, sayd Arthur, for whome & for what cause was it fyrst taken ?
Syr, yf I should shew, quod syr Delalaunde, ye should than know
some thing sounding to my velany. Neuerthelesse it semeth y^t ye
be a noble man, and the chyef of your company : therfore I shal
shew you as I know.

CAP. XXVII.

HOW THAT SYR DELALAUNDE SHEWED TO ARTHUR THE OCCASION
WHY Y^t THIS TORNAY WAS FYRST TAKEN BY THE LORDE
BEAUIEW.

Syr, it is of trouth my lorde y^e Erle of Beauiew hath alwayes loued me syth the beginning of my youth : and so it fortunēd, whan I was yonge and lusty, I thought to go playe me oute of myne owne countrey, accompanied alonely w^t my squyre, hoping to vaynquysshe all the valure of the worlde. And so at the last I came into the land of Myrpois, and fell there in acqueyntaunce w^t two noble lordes of great lygnage, who dyd me great honour. And one of them had a right fayre lady to his wyfe, named the fayre lady of Rossylon, for whome this tornay was fyrst takē. And she had such fauoure in me and loue, that within a lytle whyle I was made chyefe ruler and senesshall of all her countrey, and was of her straye counsayle : and nothinge done without it had be done by me : for she trusted more in me than in any other person of the worlde. And in like case I was wyth the good lorde her husbāde. And so I continued in thys loue and fauour well the space of syxe yeres and more : and it fortunēd one yere, y^t for my sake they kept a Christmas wyth open courte : wherto came many knightes of the countrey. And whan the fyrst daye of this began, this lady of Rossilon, wife to my sayd lorde, she was as than freshlye apparayled, as it aperteyned to the feast and to her estate. At whiche time to me she semed so fayre, so gentill, and so proper, that I thought I had neuer seen her half so fayre before. And as than her beaute stroke so inwardely to my hearte, that I lost thereby both meate and drinke, y^t euery day I began to waxe so lene of body, that euery mā had meruayle what I eyled, and demaūded often tymes of me, what was the cause that I so enpayred. But euer I did as priuely as I could : but at the ende it auayled me nothinge ; for, at the laste, loue constrayned me to shew vnto my loue, & lady,

all the dolour and payne of myne inwarde herte. And on a day, as it happened, I rose very erly, for the thoughtes of the nyght kylled me: and ryght as than I founde thys lady leanyng in a windowe. And so boldely I lened me downe by her, & than she gaue me good morowe, and desyred that God should sende me helth. Wel, madame, quod I, than the Kinge that all hath formed giue you a better day thā I haue had a night, and also better helthe; for my helth is very ferre of: the whiche right sore troubleth me. Than this lady turned her towarde me, and sayde: Syr, how is it that your health is so ferre fro you? might it not be brought nerer to you for golde nor for syluer? Madame, quod I, peraduenture, yf I shewed you, ye wold put therto no payne nor counsayle: how be it, ye myght right wel do it: so than it were better that I kept it styll secrete than to shewe it, and than to be neuer the nerer. Syr, sayd she, I requyre you; I wyll with all my herte be glad to put my payne to bryng you to ease and helth: wherfore it is a great shame for you, for whan ye may haue counsayle and remedie and wil not seke for it, but thus to suffre payne and vnherthes ease; the whiche, I ensure you, greueth right sore both my lorde and me. Therefore, good frende, by the fayth that ye owe vnto me, shew me your grefe. And therewith she came nerer to me, and enbraced me in her armes, and shewed me great sygne of loue and swetenesse, as these women be acustomed to do whan they wyll draw out of a mans mouthe that is enclosed in the herte. And whan I sawe her gentylnesse and swete behaiour, my herte was rauysshed, and brought into y^e case, that of a great season I coulde speke no worde for wepyng. But, syr, quod thys knight to Arthur, though I shewe thus vnto you my nysenes, I pray you think no folye in it, but take it in gree; for, indede, syr, yongth doth many thinges. By my fayth, syr, no more I wyll: and therefore procede forth in your tale. Syr, than I sayd vnto this lady: Madame, what so euer fortune fall therof, I wyll shew you all my desyre. Madame, it is of trouth I haue set my herte and al my thought on you, more than on all the remenaunt of the worlde, w^t so faythfull profounde loue in myne herte, as it wel appereth, and shall do by me, for nother person I loue nor can

loue, but alonlye you. And therwith my herte fayled me, y^t I coulde speke no worde more. Therwith I sat me downe, and she by me. Than she answered, and sayd : What ! syr Guy Delalaunde, it is thā thus as ye say ? Ye, madā, sayd I, without fayle. Well, syr, quod she, say ye these wordes, other to assay me, or els for very loue ? I requyre you tel me y^e trouth. By my soule, madame, quod I, this that I haue sayd, is for the great myschif that I am in without your helpe ; therefore, lady, for Gods sake haue pitie on me. And therwith I ioyned togyder my handes with great vnease of hert. Than she behelde me wel, & sayde : Syr, ye be a right wyse and sage knight ; therefore beholde wel yf your desyre be not preiudicial to any person. Madame, quod I, for trouth I se and know well that I desyre agaist my lorde treason and falsenesse, who loueth and honoureth me so muche aboue all other : how be it, madame, I se & know well that yongth and loue bryngeth me to this, so that mesure & reason fayleth in me. Therefore I hadde rather to dye than to lyue. Than this lady, who was ryght wyse and sage, sayd : Syr, be in reste, and let ioy encrease in your herte, for we wyll speake more of thys matter at a better leaser. This she sayd to giue me cōforte, & not to the entente that she wolde in any maner wyse trespase agaynste her husbände.

So thus in this maner I draue of the tyme a great season : but as sone as I coulde get her at a good leaser and conuenient place, I was euer resoning with her of this mater, & lay importunatly, daily requyring her to haue pitie of my mortall distres. And so it fortunēd on a day that we were togeder lenynge in a window loking out toward a fayre forest. Than I spake to her so fayre, and in so rufull maner, that she coulde no lenger driue of my request. And sayd : Syr, your suite is so importune, that it behoueth me to assente to fulfill your desyre & wil : how be it, syr, se ye not yonder great oke standinge in the forest ? Yes, madame, sayd I, right well. Well, quod she, I am content to fulfill your minde on this condicion ; looke that this same day twelue moneth, & this same propre houre, that ye fayle not to be vnder yonder oke, & without fayle thyder to you wyl I come, redy apparayled to acōplish your entente ; and before that day loke neuer for to haue

it. A! myne owne dere ladie, humblye I thanke you of your good wyll: syth I cannot haue it no soner, at the least I shall passe the tyme more ioyously in hoping of that fortunate daye. Wherefore I wyll take my leue nowe of you, for ye shall not se me agayne till y^t tyme be come; for yf I shoulde abyde in your dayly presēce, your beauteful eyen should slea me to abide so longe, for that thinge that I desyre. And so than I toke leue, praying her to kepe couenaunte w^t me. And so she ensured me she wolde. Than I toke licence of my lorde her husbände, shewing hī how I wolde departe into myne owne countre for a season, & he was lothe to gyue me leaue; but whā he saw that I wolde needes departe, he offred me to haue forsaken his owne countrey, and to haue gone with me, he loued me so entyerly. And so at the laste, with much sorow I gat leue, and departed priuely on a night, and dysgyssed my selfe, and went wandring aboute the coūtrei tyl the yere was past. And thā thys same day and houre that myne apoyntement was, I came to the sayd oke in the forest before the castel wyndowe; and incontinent I perceyued where this lady stode talking w^t my lordē her husbände in the same window where as she and I made our apoyntement togither. And than I made so many tokens & sygnes, that at the last she perceyued me, & than she began to smyle: and whan her lorde saw her laughe, he demaunded the cause why. And she answered, & sayde: Syr, for nothyng. For nothyng! quod the lorde; I am sure ye wyll not laughe for nought: therfore shewe me the cause; for surely I wyl know it: therfore I commaunde you to shew it. Syr, quod she, syth it pleaseth you, I am content to shewe you; but fyrst, syr, I requyre you, tell me whā that ye saw or harde of syr Guy Delalaunde. In good fayth, madame, not of a greate seasō, wherof I am ful sory: for yf I had knowen that he wolde haue taried soo longe a space, I wolde haue sought hym out or this time. Wel, syr, quod thys lady, he is not now fer hēce; syr, it is of trouth he hath before this time desyred me of loue, and in a maner his suite was importunate. And the loue that he bare me was so feruent, that he was right sore dyseased therby, the whiche was right well seen by hym whyle he was here w^t vs. And so there this lady tolde the

lorde her husbände al the mater that was betwene her & me, unto that same presente day. And than she shewed him, and sayd: Syr, this is the same day that I promised hym to haue fulfilled his desyre, to the entente I thought y^e by this day he wold haue forgotten this mater; but soo, syr, ye maye se hym vnder yonder great oke, where as he is al amaced, bycause he findeth me not there as I promysed hym. And, syr, ye maye se by hym, how y^e these folyshe louers are ouercome wyth loue. And this is y^e cause that he departed fro you, for he myghte not endure no lenger the great tourment y^e he was in. Ye, madame, quod the lorde, is it thus? than I commaunde you on y^e loue that ye bear vnto me, that ye goo and apparayle you in the freshest maner that ye can do, and than come agayne hyther to me. Than the lady dyd his cōmaundement, & came agayne to hym. And than he sayd: Madame, I wyll and also desyre you, as derely as ye thynke to kepe my loue, that ye go to yonder knyght vnder y^e oke, and suffre hym to do what so euer he wyl w^t you, and recōmaunde me hartely to hym. A! syr, sayd the lady, for nothyng wyll I do thus; for yf I had euer thought to haue fulfilled his folyshe desire, ye sholde neuer haue knowen it by my wyll. And, syr, yf I should now do it, it were to me great vylany, bothe tofore God & al the worlde. Madame, sayd the lorde, I wyll take al the synne on me: and I swere to you faythfully on my trouth, that I wil loue you and kepe you more derely euer after: therfore I wyll that ye do thus incontynent. Well, syr, sayd the lady, it behoueth me thus to do, syth it is youre pleasure: yf honoure come therby, take it to you; and yf shame come therby, ye must take it of worth. And soo than this lady came in to the forest to me, and as soon as I sawe her I was neuer soo ioyful of ony thyng. I thought I would quyte al the worlde. Than I came to her, & embraced her in myne arme ryghte swetely, and sayde: My ryghte dere ladye! my hartes desyre! ye be to me ryghte hartely welcome. Syr Delaūde, quod she, God put into your harte that ye do no wrōg nor trespace ayenst ony persone. Syr, my lorde my husbōnde hartly recommaūdeth hym vnto you, as to his own good frēde. How so, madame, quod I, where is my lord? Certainly, said she,

he is here by in his castelle. But, madame, sayde I, howe is it, doeth he know that ye be come hyder to me? Ye, syr, sayd she, as God helpe me: for he hathe caused me to be apparayled in the freshest maner, to the entent I shold please you the better: and so he hath sent me hyther to you, to the entent to fulfyll all your wyl and desire: and therefore beholde me here all readye for to accomplyshe your wyl; as for hurte or yll shall none come to you therby, neither by my lorde, nor yet by none other for hym: and so my lorde dooth faythfully assure you, and sendeth you worde by me, that he loueth you in a maner better than he dooeth hymselfe. And whan I harde the great courtesy of my lord, and how that he loued me as well as hymselfe, and how that he sent me the thyng that he loued best in all the world, to fulfyll my desyre therwith, and how that he would suffre that vylany for my sake; therw^t fel away clene all my foly and vnresonable desyre. For than I thoughte it was better to leue my sensual apetyte, than to haue done that I had enterprysed in my harte; for I thoughte than it shoulde haue bene a great shame for me to do vilany to so noble & gentyll a lordes harte. Than I kneled downe before the lady, requyryng her of pardon of the great outrage and foly that I thought ayenst her, desyrynge her, for Goddes sake, to helpe to make my peace again wyth the good lorde her husbonde. Than she toke me by the hande, and broughte me into the castell, before the presence of her lorde. And as soone as he sawe me enbraced and kyssed me. Than I kneled downe before hym, and cryed hym mercy, and ther the peace was made bytwene vs, and euer syth he hath loued me as wel as euer he dyd before, or better. Now, fayre syr, I haue shewed you al myne aduenture, the whyche is ryghte well knowen of many folkes.

And so it fortuneth, y^t but now of late my lorde Beauiew was at a feest with the Erle of Forest, and ther my said lorde tooke this ladye Rossylon by the hande to daunce: and the Marshal of Mirpois was ther present, who is ryght enuious. And whan he sawe this my lorde and lady daunce togyther, he sayd how that my lorde of Beauiew shoulde be the seconde. Than the lorde of Beauiew wist wel ynoughe what he mente, and sayde: Syr marshall, as for syr Guy Dela-

launde, he is a ryghte good knyghte, bothe wyse and true. The marshall aunswered, and said : His bounte apered wel, whā he toke his owne lordes wyfe. Syr, sayd the Erle of Beauiew, thoughe he desyred her loue, yet I dare well saye, that he neuer trespaced neyther agaynste his lorde, nor yet agaynst her ; for he dyd not dysguyse hymselfe lyke a rybaude, for to come vnto the wyfe of hys forester, as some hath done y^t I know ryght well. Wherwyth the marshall was sore chafed, for it touched his owne delyng, and sayde : Syr, ye be but a fole to say these wordes to me. And thus thei multiplyed in language so fer, that the Erle of Forest and the Erle of Neuers had moche ado to appease them ; and so for this entent was the tournay takē of bothe parties, whiche shal be this Wednesdaye next comyng : and there wyll be many gret lordes of the marshalles partye, as the Erle of Foys, the Erle of Moūbelyall, and the Dolphyn of Vyenes, and many other knyghtes, and also Alexander the yonge Kynge of Malogre. And of my lordes partye wyl be syr Jakes, Earle of Forest, & the Erle of Neuers, & diuers other : therefore, syr, I doubte me gretely of my lord the Erle of Beauiew, for I wolde be right sory yf he had not the honour ; therefore I praye you and al youre company to be at this tournay on my lordes party : for whan ye se hym ye wyll saye it were pite but he shold haue the vycory. Syr, thus I haue shewed you all the trouth of the mater. Veryly, syr, sayd Arthur, wyth a good wyl I shal be w^t your lorde. But, syr, I pray you, shal this lady of Rossylon be at this tournay ? Syr, as God helpe me, she shal be there, and many other great ladies & damoyselles ; & also it is ordeyned by comyn accorde, that he that dooth best shal be made like a king ouer al other erles, barons, & knyghtes, that shall be there assembled, & shall be crowned wyth golde as a kynge : and al they, with all y^e power that thei can make, shal be content to go w^t hym in battayle, whether so euer he wyl haue them ; and so fro thensforth he shal be called kyng of the cōpany : & this marshall entendeth to haue this honour yf he may ; for surely he is a good knyght of hys handes, & moche goodnes is in hym, yf his tongue were not : but that lytle more shameth all the remenaūt, as it dooth to all them that God hath giuen an yll tongue vnto.

CAP. XXVIII.

HOW THAT ARTHUR HAD THE HONORE IN THE TOURNAY THAT WAS MADE AT VYEN BYTWENE THE MARSHAL OF MYRPOIS AND THE ERLE OF BEAUIEW, WHERE AS WAS DYUERSE GREAT KYNGES, EARLES, BARONS, AND MANY OTHER GOOD KNYGHTEs, RYGHTE VALYAUNTE; WHEREBY ARTHUR GATE HIM GREAT THANKE AND PRAYSE, AND WAS GREATLY HONOURED OF ALL LADYES AND DAMOYSELLES THERE ASSEMBLED.

AND after that syr Guy Delalaūde had shewed al this processe to Arthur & to his company, they rode forth togider, & so came to Lyon sur le Rone, and so passed ouer the brydge and rode through the towne, & in a fayre medowe vnder y^e townes syde they espyed where tentes & paulyons were rychely pyghte: at whych tyme there were assembled many grete and noble kynges, erles, barōs, and other knyghtes, as well of the one party as of the other. And than syr Guy Delalaunde sende a messenger to the Erle of Beauiew, certyfyng hym how he had brought in valyaūt knyghtes with him, and that in ony wyse he shoulde retayne them to be of his company. And whan the Erle of Beauiew, and the Erle of Forest, and the Erle of Neuers, harde these tydynges, they came out of theyr tentes, & saw where syr Guy Delalaunde and Arthur & his company came rydyng. And soo whan they came nere thei lyghted & salewed these earles, who dyd beholde Arthur, and perceyued well howe that he was a meruaylous fayre knyghte, great, and bygge, and well furnysshed, and semed wel to be of great fyersnes and of greate estate; and also they saw Hector, a bygge knight, & a wel made, both of body, armes, and legges; & also thei behelde Gouvernar, who was a great and a bigge man, and wel made therto; and that these erles praysed moche these knyghtes in their hartes. Than the Earle of Beauiew toke Arthur by the hande, & sayd: Syr, ye be ryght hartely welcome into the countre of Vyennes, prayenge you hartely to take your lodging with me, & wyth these other two erles here presente. Than

Arthur sayd: Syr, with a ryght good wyll; & so thei ledde hym into theyr tentes, and there Arthur, Hector, & Gouvernar, were vnarmed. And whan they were oute of theyr harneys, euery man beheld Arthur, for he was meruaylous fayre; so that tydinges came into y^e ladyes tentes, howe that syr Guy Delalaūde was come, and had brought wyth him thre goodly knyghtes, & specially one of them, who was the fayrest and goodlyest that euer was seen; so that there was no bruyte nor talking throughout al the hoost, but of these thre knyghtes. Some said, of whence be they? who knoweth them? Thus was the commoning of them in euery place.

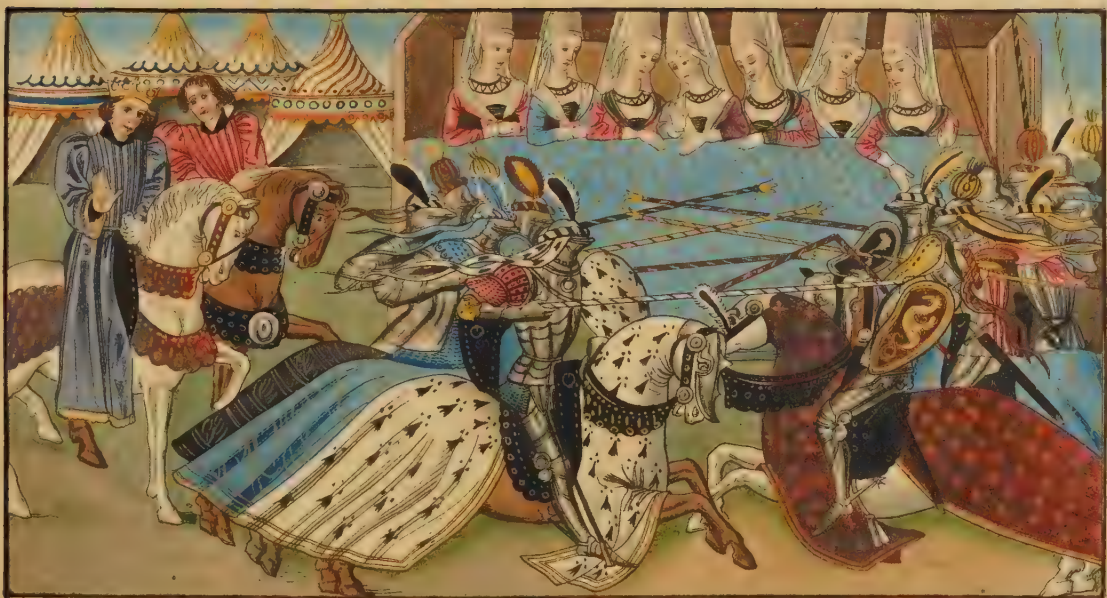
Thā Arthur & his company yssued out of the tentes, & behelde the fresshe baners, and standardes, & stremers, waueryng in the wynde, pyght before euery tente & paulyon; & harde also the trompettes, tabouryns, & hornes, sownynge in euery corner of the felde; and great coursers braynge, and knyghtes renning, assayenge of horses, castynge of speres, shynyng of sheldes ayenst the sonne, & glysteryng of helmes, & knyghtes by great company talkynge togider: also they espyed the great tente of the ladyes, in the heyght thereof, pyght a great shynyng apple all of burned golde, & ladyes & damoyelles therein syngynge and dauncynge. Than Arthurs harte began to smyle, and sayde to Hector: Cosyn, how saye ye, is it not better to be here, and to se all this noblesse, than to crepe into our moders lappes? Yes, veryly, sayde Hector, for here now shall appere who be noble men. Ye saye trouth, sayde Arthur; & therewith retourned into the Erle of Beauiewes tente, and wente to souper; and fyrste sate downe the Earle of Neuers & Arthur nexte hym, and than the Erle of Forest and Hector, & the Earle of Beauiew and Gouvernar, & there they were rychely serued. And after souper thei plaied and sported thē tyll it was tyme to goo to theyr restes; and so than wente to theyr lodgynge tyll the nexte mornynge: at whiche tyme they rose and harde masse, and than walked & talked togyder withoute theyr tentes. And therwyth there came to them a knyght fro the Marshall of Myrpoys, and sayde to the Erle of Beauiew: Syr, whan so euer ye wyll begyn this tournay, my lord the marshall is al redy. Now, as God helpe me, sayde the Erle of Neuers, let vs go to it

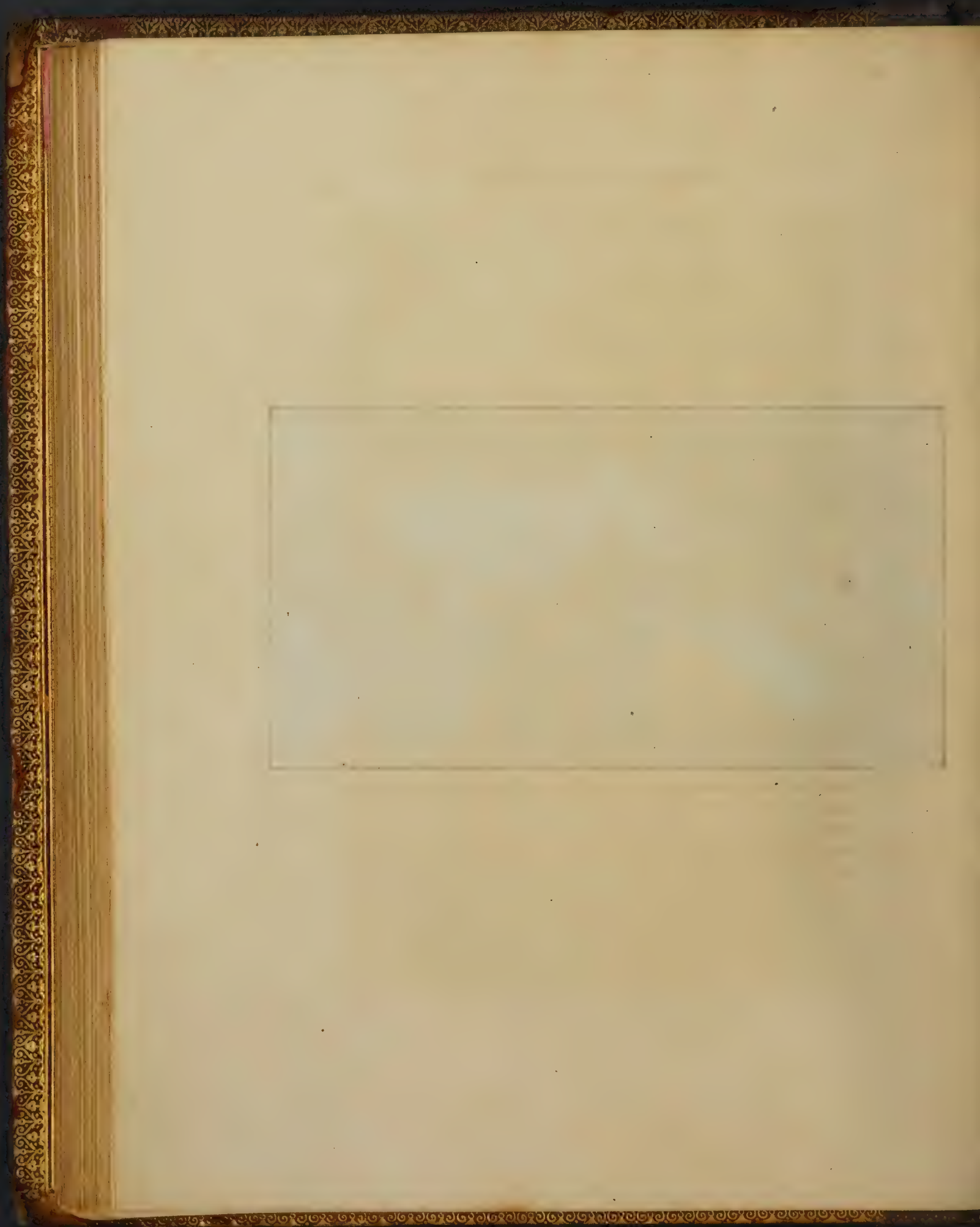
incontinent. But, syr knight, I pray you tell me what company dooth your lord tournay w^t all? Syr, sayde y^e knyght, he hath in his company well to the nombre of .ix.C. redy apparayled to tournay. In the name of God, said the Earle of Forest, that is an yl partye, for I thinke our company passeth not .v.C. Well, syr, sayd Arthur, what than? Care not for the nombre of people: therfore let vs shortly goo and se these noble men, and I truste God wyll helpe vs. Well, syr, sayde the Earle of Beauiew, as God wyll, soo be it. But, syr, wyl ye than helpe vs, and be of our partye? With a ryght good wyll, syr, sayd Arthur, Hector, & Gouvernar also. And than this knyght of y^e marshalles praised moche Arthur in his harte, and soo retourned to hys mayster, who as than was in the company of the yonge Kynge of Malogre, and with them the Erle of Mountbelyal, and the Erle of Foys, and the Dolphyn, who was a lytle dyseased, & therefore he would not as that day tournay.

Than the knyght sayd to the marshall: Syr, the Erle of Beauiew demaundeth of you the tournay incontinēt. But, syr, one thyng I tell you, syth ye were borne ye sawe neuer thre so goodly knyghtes as syr Delalaūde hath brought wyth him; but I can not know of whens thei be, but one of them surmounteth the other two bothe in beaute and goodlynēs. Jhesu! sayd the Kynge of Malogre, what knyghtes be thei? In good fayth, syr, sayd the knyghte, there can no man tell. Wyll they tournay this daye? sayd the kynge. Ye, syr, veryly, sayd the knyght; for right now, whan y^e Erle of Beauiew fered that he had not cōpany sufficient to answere your power, I hard y^e chefe of these .iii. knyghtes say vnto hym: Syr, care not for y^e, for God shal helpe vs; let vs shortly go se them. Than it semeth, sayd the kinge, that he hath a good harte. Ye, syr, sayd the marshall, he beleueth y^e there is not in all the world his pere in dedes of chyualry; therfore let vs go shortly se what he can doo. He sayde trulyer than he was ware of; for Arthur coude ryght wel gyue great strokes, as was ryght well proued after, by his noble dedes. Than was it cōmaūded that trompettes & hornes should be blowen, and than knyghtes in euery part went to theyr harneys. Than the

marshal, and the Erle of Mountbelyal, and the Earle of Foys, & well to the nombre of .ix. hondred knyghtes, were anone redy armed: and the yonge Kyng of Malogres was mounted on a great courser, and the Dolphyn wyth him, to the entent to se this tournay, for they woulde not turnay as y^e day. And incontinent as the ladyes and damoysselles harde the sownynge of the trompettes & hornes, they yssued out of theyr paunylyons: and there was together in company, the Countesse of Neuers, and the Countesse of Forest, and the Countesse of Mountbelyall, and the lady of Rossylon, & a lady who was the Marshals syster, named dame Blaunche. And than the Countesse of Neuers sayd: Let vs now take good hede of thys knyght that is come with syr Guy Dela-launde, and se what he can do. In the name of God, said y^e ladye of Rossylon, there be thre as I vnderstande, but I wote not what they be. And all this season Arthur was in company with y^e Erle of Forest, and with the Erle of Neuers, & the Erle of Beauiew: and whan thei were redy armed, they mounted on theyr horses: and the Erle of Neuers and Arthur rode fyrst togyder, and after them the Erle of Forest and Hector, and the Erle of Beauiew and Gouvernar, and after them all the other of theer cōpany: and in ryghte good ordynaunce they rode forthe to the tournay. And than the lady of Rossylon said to the other ladyes that were in her company: Beholde, yonder is one of the straūge knyghtes that cometh riding with the Erle of Neuers, & an other wyth the Erle of Forest. In the name of God, sayd the marshalles syster, the thyrde cometh with the Erle of Beauiew: it semeth that the erles maketh moche of these .iiii. straūge knyghtes, but they knowe not as yet the force of the marshal my broder; but whan they mete here in the tournay, than shall they haue of hym suche acquaintance, that thei wil wyshe that they had not come here this daye. Noo, fayre lady, sayd the lady of Rossylon, I praye you than shewe them some courtesye: sende some worde to them that they flee awaye before they se the marshall your broder; for I am sure yf thei se him they are but lost for euer. At whych wordes all the other ladyes dyde laughe, and had great sporte. So thus the Erle of Neuers and Arthur rode forthe tyll it was tyme to begyn the

tourney. And than the Earle of Neuers saw the marshall on the other parte, redy apparayled to just, and shewed him to Arthur. Thā Arthur sayd: Syr, he cometh very hastily, wherfore I requyre you let me encounter hym fyrst. Go youre waye in Goddes name, sayde the erle. Than Arthur rusht forth so rudelye as thonder had fallen fro heauen, & al the other knyghtes of the turnay beheld him wel, and praysed him moche in theyr heartes. Than the lady of Rossylon sayd to y^e marshalles syster: Fayre ladye, I trowe yonder knyght hath espyed youre broder, for ye may se howe faste he flyeth. And at that course the marshall hytte Arthur in the myddes of hys shyelde, and brake hys spere; and Arthur strake him so rudely on the helme, that he sheuered hys speare all to peces: wyth the whych stroke he sente both knyght and horse to the erth; and at an other course, Arthur strake an other knyght so sore, that he brake a grette pece of hys helme and shelde, and ouerthrewe hym flatte to the earth, in a gret traunce, sore wounded. And whan the yong King of Malogres sawe that, he sayd to the Dolphin: Saint Mary! who is yonder knight, he semeth too be the beste knyghte of the worlde. Verelye, syr, sayde the Dolphyn, I neuer sawe suche strokes gyuen of anye knyght here before. Than sayde the lady of Rossylon to the marshalles syster: Madame, behold howe yonder straunge knyghte flyeth; but your brother, the marshal, holdeth agayne: I hadde wende he durst haue gone no ferder, for feare of your brother. At whyche tyme Hector also, for his parte, strake a knight with so great force, that he ouerthrewe hym playne too the erth; & Gouvernar strake an other downe horse and man, and put hym selfe in the thyckest of the prese, and dyd maruayles in armes; soo that all that behelde hym praysed hym greatlye. Than the ladye of Rossylon sayd: Fayre ladye Blaunche, how say ye, are not these straunge knyghtes ryghte valyaunte; therefore, madame, for Goddes sake cause the marshal your broder to absente hym selfe out of their syghtes; and in your soo doying, I thynke verely you shall do a gret almes dede. Than Arthur rusht into the grettest prease, and strake on the ryght hande, and on the left, so gret strokes and so heauy, that it was maruayle; for there was





none that euer abode hym but he auoyded the arson of hys sadel and fell to the earth. At the last, Arthur espyed where there was a squyer holdyng in hys hande a spoke, or a great pece of an olde broken charyot, the whyche he pulled out of his hande wyth suche a myghte, that he caste downe the squyer flatte too the earthe: where at the ladyes and damoysselles dydde laughe. And than Arthur put vp hys sworde, to the entente y^t he should mayme or hurte no man: but with that pece of the charyot he thrust in to the prese, and gaue therewith so great and heuy strokes, that all that he touched wente flatte to the earth. For he was of that condycyon, that the more he hadde to do, the more grewe hys strength and vertue: he vnbarred helmes, and claue asunder sheldes, and maruaylously bet downe knyghtes: for whome someuer he touched were so astonyed, that eyther he auoyded the sadell, or elles hys horse bare hym in a traunce all aboute the fylde. And alsoo Hector and Gouvernar dydde as well for theyr partes, as anye knyghtes ought or myghte doo. Soo it fortunied, as Arthur wente searchyng the renkthes and preses, he encountred the Erle of Foys, who had nygh vnhorsed one of the knyghtes of the Erle of Beauieus partye; than Arthur prycked forth hys horse, and strake the earle soo rudely, that he thrust downe both horse and man flatte to the erth: than Arthur turned agayne to hym, and whether he wolde or not, he caused hym to be yelden prysoner to the Earle of Beauiew, who was lorde of that tournay on hys partye. Than the knyghtes of hys turnay assembled them togyther by plūpes, here .x., and there .xv., and yonder .xx., and soo fought egerly togyder; soo that whan one was fallen another dyd releue hym. Some laughed, and some playned; but Arthur was euer in the mooste thyckest of the prese, and fared so amonge them as the wolfe doth among shepe; and layd on wyth so greate and heauye strokes, that he frussched downe all that euer he touched. Than the Earle of Beauiew sayd, and so dyd all other knyghtes, how that they neuer sawe knyghte of so grete vertue, nor in valure in dedes of armes. The ladyes and damoysselles also gretly maruayled at hym, and sayde: That better than he is was there neuer none. And they concluded amonge them, that he was lykely too

attayne to wynde the crowne of that tournaye, if he continued hys prowes accordyng too hys begynnynge.

So than it fortuneth that a great parte of the marshals company ranne al at ones on the Erle of Neuers and on his company, who were farre ouermatched: wherfore he was sore bestadde, and lost many horses, and many of his knyghtes sore beten, & hymselfe ouerthrowen downe from his horse, and was lykely to haue be taken & yelded to the marshall. But than an herauide of armes began to crye, and sayd: Ha! Arthur of Brytayne! where art thou nowe? the Erle of Neuers is beten, & nere taken prysoner. And Arthur, whan he hearde that, who as than had, by the helpe of Hector & Gouvernar, dyscomfyted a great route of knyghtes, and whan he espyed the Erle of Neuers on the ground, he sported forth hys horse, and ranne into the thickest of the prease, and strake so the fyrst that he encountred, that he fell downe to the erthe both hors & man: than he strake on the right syde and on the lefte wyth so myghtye strokes and heauy, that he bet downe all that was before hym, so that none durst abyde hym. And also Hector and Gouvernar layde on so on all sydes, that al that were before theym trembled for feare. And so by clene force, in the spite of al his enemyes, he horsed agayne the Earle of Neuers: and whan he was thus remounted, Arthur than lepte agayne intoo the prese, and dyd maruayles with hys handes; for he claue asonder sheldes, and vnbarred helmes, and bette downe knyghtes by great heapes. Thus was Arthur regarded of al people, who sayde eche to other: Jhesu! what a wonders good knyghte is yonder! God defende & kepe hym! And the yonge Kynge of Malogres had hys eyen euer vpon hym, and sayd to the Dolphyn: I thynke yonder knyghte be none earthly man; I wene he be some spyryte of the ayre, for he all confoundeth. Than the ladye of Rossylon sayd to the marshals syster: Madame, ye haue done ryghte well; for I beleue surely ye haue prayed your broder that he sholde do noo hurte to these straunge knyghtes: and al the other ladyes had ryght greate sporte at the mery gestyng of these twoo ladyes. And thus alwaies Arthur was fighting; and at laste there were .iii. knyghtes ran al at ones on the Erle of Forest, and bet hym downe to the earth, and wold haue

taken hym prysoner. But whan Arthur sawe the erle at that myscheffe, he spored hys hors thyderward : and the fyrst that he encountred he draue downe flatte to the earth ; and the seconde he toke in hys armes, and rasshed hym out of the sadell, and cast hym downe on hym that he had before ouerthrowen : the whych greued hym ryght sore, for the knyght was grete and heauy, because of the harneys that was on hym. Than he that laye vndernethe sayde : A ! syr, ye be but yll welcome to me, nor he that sendeth you hyther : I praye God he maye haue some yll aduenture, for ye haue all too brused me wyth youre fallynge. Than Arthur tooke the knyghtes horse and caused the Erle of Forest to mount thereon. And Arthur put hym selfe agayne into the thickest prese, and began agayne to fyght as fresshely as though he had done nothyng before of all that daye, soo that he was dradde in euery place, for there was none durst abyde hym, but al fledde fro hym : soo at the last he came where as the chiefe standarde was, where as he found the marshall, who dyd hys payne to bete downe all that was afore hym : at whyche time he had stryken fro Gouvernar his shyelde. And therwyth Arthur strake hym on the helme so rudely, that he draue him downe too the earthe all astonyed : and Arthur toke hys horse and gaue it to Hector, for hys horse fayled hym, he was so sore woūded ; and than Hector mounted on hym. And this stroke was seene of the kynge, and of the Dolphyn, and of all the ladies and damoysels : and they all sayde : That the marshal had bene the best knyght of all the worlde, but nowe he hath mette hys mayster ; for certaynely yonder fayre knyghte surmounteth in prowesse all other knyghtes of the worlde. Than the lady of Rossylon sayd vnto the marshalles syster : Madame, youre broder is not so yll and myscheuous as ye spake of here before : so ye may behold these straunge knyghtes howe they are before hym, and yet he dooth no thyng too theym ; I thynke he slepeth, for ye maye se yonder howe styll he lyeth on the grounde ; for al that season he lay styl on the earthe, sore astonyed, in a greate traunce. And whan all the knyghtes of hys partye saw hym lye so styll vpon the grounde, they feared least he had bene dead, and sayde that one vnto that other : Yonder is the deuyll ; I thynke he wyll confounde

vs all, therefore let vs depart out of thys fyelde: and therwyth they al went theyr wayes; & so there remayned styll Arthur, Hector, and Gouvernar. And whan that the yong kynge, and the Dolphyn, and manye other, saw Arthur alone in the felde, they came to hym and salewed hym, and sayd: Syr, God kepe you the best knyght of the world, and encrease your noble honoure and valure! My lorde, sayde Arthur, God that al thyng hath fourmed of noughte, may encrease your bounte and be youre sauegarde! and, syr, sauynge youre grace, I am none suche knyght worthy for to haue suche prayse as ye gyue me. Well, syr, sayde the kynge, we haue sene ryghte well how it is: therfore, myne owne swete frende, I requyre you that ye wyll be one of my house, and ye shall be my companyon. Syr, sayde Arthur, I am ryght well yours where so euer I be; howe be it, I haue a lorde already, who hath nouryssed me lyke hys owne chylde. Syr, in good trouthe, sayde the Erle of Forest, it is good ryghte than that ye loue hym.

And as they were thus talking togyther, the marshal rose from the grounde; and whan he sawe that the tourney was done and fynnyshed, and that he hadde done nothyng to hym that had beaten hym downe, he was ryghte sore dyspleased; and than he sente a knyght to the Erle of Beauiew, desyrynge hym for to haue the tournay to begyn agayne the nexte daye, and how that he wolde encountre yet agayne wyth Arthur. This knyght founde the Erle of Beauiew in the companye of the yonge kynge and of Arthur. And than he sayde: Syr, my lord the marshal saleweth you, and desyreth you agayne too haue a tournay to morowe. By the good Lorde, quod the yonge kynge, youre mayster ought for to suffyse and be contente of that whyche hath bene done here thys daye, wherefore it is reason that he now resteth hym selfe. For the kynge ful well thought that the marshal woulde not be in ease tyl that he were reuenged of Arthur. A! syr, sayde Arthur, the marshal is not yet weary, and he wolde thynke my lorde of Beauiew for recreaunt yf he sholde refuse his request: therefore, syr, for Goddes sake graunt hym. Syr, sayde the erle, wyth a ryght good wyll, sythe it pleaseth you: but, syr, I requyre you than to helpe our party. Verely, syr, sayde Arthur, wyth all my

heart, to the beste of my lytell power. So than there was graunted too be an other tournaÿ on the nexte daye. Than syr Guy Delaunde came vntoo Arthur and ledde hym to be vnarmed. So than Arthur toke hys leaue of the kynge, who wolde right gladly haue had hym in hys companye. And than all the people ranne to beholde Arthur, and sayd wyth a comyn voyce : Beholde hym that all hath vanquysshed ! Than whan Arthur was vnarmed y^e Erle of Beauiew kept him company ; and also Hector and Gouvernar were vnarmed. Than the ladyes and damoysselles retourned intoo theyr paulyons, alwayes speakynge of Arthur : and than they assembled theym togyder by plumpes, here ten and there twelue ; and all the countesses were togyder in one parte, and wyth theym the marshalles syster dame Blaunche, and the ladye Rossylon, speakyng euer of Arthur. Verely, sayde the Countes of Forest, syth I was fyrst borne I neuer sawe soo good a knyght, nor so valyaunte, nor so well doynge in armes, as he is. It is of a trouth, sayde the ladye Neuers ; saw ye not howe that he brake the great companyes of knyghtes, and tourned and ouerthrewe all that euer he touched ? By my soule, sayde the Countes of Foys, I saw hym whan he embraced a knyghte in hys armes al armed, and caste hym downe vpon an other knyght, and brused hym ryghte sore therewyth ; and also, sawe ye not howe y^t he strake the marshal downe to the grounde ? To saye the trouthe, he is the best knyght of the worlde ; and the mooste hardyest. And, more ouer, all the beauty of the worlde that cā be comprysed in a man, is in hym. Also he is replete wyth all grace and vertue, for hee is free, meeke, and gentyl as a lambe. By the faythe that I owe vnto God, sayde the ladye Rossylon, my ladye the Countes of Forest, I woulde he were youre knyghte ! I beleue you wel, sayde the ladye Blaunche, for than I thynke verelye ye would speke with him oftentimes whan other ladyes were abedde faste on slepe, wyth as fewe a companye as ye myghte wythout makynge of anye noyse ; but shame haue she that wyl forfayte wyth an other that is not her owne. Certaynely, answered the lady Rossylon, I thynke there be but fewe in this world borne, that lyueth clene bothe in thought and in dede : how be it, I am not she y^t closeth priuely knyghtes

in her chaumbre by nyghte tymes, wythoute the lycence of my lorde, nor kepe none vnder my couerture: howe saye you, fayre lady, know you any otherwyse by mee? yf ye doo, spare not, but speake it here openly: yf ye be of that condycions, or haue done soo, ye oughte than the rather too be the more secrete; yf ye knowe that malady to be in an other, whan you knowe youre owne estate, leue the enquiryng of any farder than nedeth of any other; for I am in certayn that ye be sometye in the shadowe oftener than I am in the sonne: with company oftener than I am alone. Than al the ladyes and damoysselles began to laugh, and tourned all the matter intoo japes and sportes. And all this while Arthur was in the Erle of Beauiew's tent, and there was wyth hym syr Guy Dela-launde, and there he was well serued, and mucche honoured of euerye man. And after souper they passed forthe the tyme in great ioy and moche myrth, tyll it was conuenient tyme to go to theyr restes.

CAP. XXIX.

HOWE THAT ARTHUR THE SECOND DAY HAD THE HONORE OF THE TOURNEY, AND SOO WYTH HYM ABODE THE PRYCE OF THE FELDE.

THE nexte daye betymes Arthur arose, and all the other erles, barons, and knyghtes, to heare masse; and after, they armed them all of both partyes, and soo than came intoo the fylde there as they should turney: and as soon as Arthur and the marshall sawe eche other, they apparayled them to renne togyder, and dasshed too theyr horses, and encountred so rudely, that they all to brake theyr speres, the whyche were greate and bygge, as though they had beene but redes, and so passed forth wythoute hurtyng of eche other: and whan that Arthur hadde perfourmed hys course, he encountred an other knyghte, and strake hym soo with the tronchon

of his speare, that he was therewith sore wounded and fell downe to the erth. Than Hector and Gouvernar began to stryue, and to beare downe knyghtes vygoryously, and dyd enforce theym to doo noble dedes of armes. Than Arthur fought soo amonge them wyth suche vertue, that he caused al the rankethes and prease of knyghtes to auoyde and gyue hī place: euery thyng fell too hym as he woulde wysshe it, for he felled sheldes, and bette downe knyghtes, and wanne horses, and enforced prysoners to yelde them at hys pleasure, so that al fledde before hym, for none durste encountre his mighty strokes. Than the ladye of Rosselyn, who was as than nere to the Countes of Forest, sayd to the marshalles syster: Madame, yet I sayde truely yesterday, whan that I sayde how that this knyght was metely too be retayned with a great lady, wherfore I wolde he were partaining with my lady the Countes of Forest here presente; for he is noo knyghte to be comyn to all ladyes, such as wheleth aboute the chymney, as I thynke some suche ye knowe ryght well, for there be many that choseth not by the wyll one all onely, but are glad to take suche as they maye get; for elles, paraduenture, they myght tarye very longe or they founde suche a knyghte as thys is. Than the Countesse of Neuers sayde to the Countesse of Forest: Marye, madame, this lady payeth wythout anye gage sellyng. Truely, sayd the Countes of Forest, they that speaketh fayre, fayre shal here agayne: but thys marshals syster spake yesterday vylanye to my lady Rossylon, & therefore now she remembreth her therof.

And so it fortuneth, that in this season the lord of the castel Yssembart, and Reynold of Piereyle, and wel .xv. other knyghtes of theyr route, toke theyr counsaile to renne al at ones ayenst Arthur, too the ehntent to brynge hym to the grounde. And whan they sawe that Arthur hadde bene wel trauayled, and that they thought he had bene weary, than they al togyder ran at hym and strake him on all sydes, and charged him with so many strokes that his hors enfoūdred vnder hym: howe be it, as hys hors fell he toke syr Issembart, that was before hym, in hys armes, and cast hym downe to the earth in the spyte of his herte. And whan they were booth at the grounde, than Arthur stepte vpon his fete and layde handes on syr Issen-

bartes hors, and mounted thereon ayenst the wyl of al hys enemyes. And whan Reynolde of Pierrele sawe that, he went wyth suche good ayde as he had and enbraced Arthur wyth both hys handes, and soo eche of them helde other ryghte sore, and therwith other knyghtes came soo fyercelye on them, that they were dryuen downe to the erthe both hors and man. Than Arthur lepte on his feete agayne, and as he that was ryghte sore dyspleased, ran to the Erle of Foys and toke hym in his armes with a gret force, and pulled hym soo rudelye, that the gyrthes, and paytrell, and harnes, all too braste, and so the erle ouerthrew wyth the sadell bytwene hys legges: than Arthur lepte on the horse bare backed, and tooke from a squier a mace of stele that he bare in his hande, and layd on wyth bothe hys handes, and strake the fyrste that he encountred soo rudelye, that he tourned hys legges vpwarde: and than he wente to an other knyghte and strake hym soo sore, that he was so astonyed therwyth, that hys horse bare hym halfe a myle or that he wyst where he was. And so in this ragyhere Arthur droue downe .x. knyghtes or euer he rested; and layde on euer bothe on the ryghte syde and on the lefte wyth so great yre, that he confounded all that euer he touched: he was in such a furour, that he wyst not well whether he was on horsebacke or on foote, wyth sadell or withoute sadell; and fomed soo at the mouth, that al those that than sawe hym, sayd that he was out of hys wytte, soo that all fledde before hym, and gaue hym waye wheresoeuer that he wente: and dydde so muche, that he escaped clene from all the knyghtes whyche were in the thought for to haue put hym to rebuke and shame; so that the place where as he stode was clene auoyded. Than came there to hym Hector and Gouvernar. Whan they sawe hym wythout a sadel they were greatlye maruayled thereof: and so therwyth Hector rode toward a knyght so fyercely, that he bare hym downe to the grounde, and Gouvernar tooke hys hors and brought hym vnto Arthur. And whan Arthur apperceyued that he had noo sadell vnder hym, he maruayled gretely, for he was soo sore trauayled before, that he toke noo hede thereof. Than he axed of Hector and of Gouvernar how he hadde loste hys sadell, and wheder he hadde any fall or not. And than they shewed hym all

how it was, whereat they dyd laugh. And whan that Arthur was mounted intoo the sadell, he sawe before hym where as there stode all the countesses, and dyuerse other ladyes and damoysselles, wythoute theyr tentes for to behold the tourney; than he spurred hys hors, and came to thē, and alighted down to the erth, and humbly salewed theym, & sayd: Fayre ladyes, God, that al fourmed, gyue ioye and honoure to al youre noble company, the whiche is ryght fayre and gentyll. Syr, sayde they all, ye be hyther ryght welcome. Well, fayre ladyes, sayde Arthur, for Goddes sake be not dysplesed that I am soo bolde too come too you, for it should haue bene greate vylanye to me, seying that I was so nere your presence, yf I had not done my duety in salewyng of your noblenesse.

And in the meane tyme, as they thus talked togyder, the Erle of Foys and his rout ranne on the Erle of Forest and his companye, & helde hym soo harde and shorte, that he brake all the route of his companye, and nye had taken prysoner the Erle of Forest, for he was beten downe to the earth. And whan the countes, his wife, saw her lord so nye ouercome, she sayde vnto Arthur: Syr knyghte, of what company be ye of in this tourney? Fayre lady, said Arthur, I am of the company pertaynyng to the Erle of Forest. Certenly, syr, sayd the ladye, I beleue not that, for yf ye were of hys company ye wolde not suffre hym too be delte with as he is now: but I thinke ye loue better ease and rest than to tournay; and in your so doying, ye do wel and wysely, for it is better to be in the shadow thā in the sonne light. Whanne Arthur hearde her saye so, he was gretly abashed, and tourned hys vysage toward the turney, and sawe where the Erle of Forest was beten fro his horse, and stode defendyng of himself on fote. And than he sayde to the Countesse of Forest: Madame, for Goddes sake I aske you mercye, for I thoughte ful lytel that my lorde youre husbonde had bene in this case: but, by the grace of God, I shal sone helpe and socoure hym. Ye, sayde the lady, I know ye be very ferce: ye se him now almost at a gret myschefe, and yet ye stande here styll preaching to vs. And whan Arthur herd that, he was sore dysplesed, and so mouēd on his hors, and

without any longer delay he rusht into the thyckest of the route soo rudelye, that hys hors went like the thunder : & al the ladies behelde him right well, and sayde : God kepe and defende the fro myschefe or shame. And Arthur rushte into the prese, and strake the first so rudely, y^t he ouerthrew bothe hors and man ; than the ladyes began to laugh : than Arthur toke an other with his handes by the sholders, and cast him rudelye to y^e erth : thā he toke his mase of stele hanging at hys sadel bow, and strake so fiersly therwyth rounde aboute hym in euery place, that he brake the prese and bet downe knyghtes, soo that there were none that durste approche vntoo hym, but they all fledde before hym as the smal fowles dooth afore the fawcon. Than Arthur came to the Erle of Forest, and brought him a new hors, and helped hym to mount thereon. Than Arthur rode to the Erle of Foys, and the erle gaue hym a great stroke on the helme, but Arthur moued noo more for al the stroke than though he had stryken a great toure ; but Arthur strake hym agayne so fiersly, that he caused hym to auoyde the arson of hys sadel ; and Jaket, Arthurs squyer, toke the horse. Than Arthur sayde to hym : Jaket, I wil thou go with that hors, and presente it fro me too my lady the Countes of Forest, who right now blamed me ful sore. Syr, quod Jaket, with a right good wyl ; and so wente forth with the hors. And Arthur al thys season helde vnder hym the Erle of Foys, in suche wyse, tyll at the last the Earle of Forest came to them, and so there to him the Erle of Foys was fayne to yelde hym selfe. Than Arthur put him selfe againe into the prease, and strake so on all partes, that fynally euery man fledde from hym, and left him in the place all alone. Than Arthur cried openly, and sayde : Yf there be any knyght that dare come, let hym appere ! But he myghte haue taryed there long ynough or any that was ther wold haue comen to him. Than syr Gui Delalaunde came to him, and sayde : Syr, I haue promysed you, that I shuld shew vnto you the ladye of Rossylon ; pleaseth it you now, therefore, to come with me, & ye shal se her ? By the fayth that I owe to God, I wil go with you gladly. And thā thei two, and Hector, & Gouvernar, rode forthe to the ladies tente ; and by the way they encoūtered Jaket, who had done his message.

And he shewed to Arthur how that the Countes of Forest ryght hartly did thanke him. And whan thei were before the tente, thei lyghted. And than generallye all the ladyes and damoysselles came to themwarde, wyth greate feeste and ioye. And whan Arthur was within the tente wyth the ladyes, who affectually behelde him, than the Countesse of Neuers, and the Countes of Forest, right hartely dyd welcome hym. And he answered, & said: Fayre ladies, great welth and honoures God maye sende vnto you all. Than the Countesse of Foys dide salewe hym, & said: Syr, yet I oughte not thus to salewe you, syth ye haue so yl entreted my lorde my husbände this daye. A! my ryghte dere ladye, sayde Arthur, ye ought not therefore to blame mee; for it was but the fortune of that play. Truly, syr, sayd she, ye say nothing but trouthe, nor I bere not to you therefore any euil wyll. Than the Countesse of Forest said, who had spoken to hym before ryght rudely: Syr, I humbly requyre of you pardon: and I wyll make you amendes in y^t I haue soo rudely spoken to you before this tyme; wherefore, noble and gentyll knyghte, take noo regarde to the vayne wordes of a woman, whoo lightly openeth her mouthe to speake; but beholde your great bounte and noblenes where wyth ye be gretly endued; but, syr, that I said was because I sawe my lorde at a great mischefe.

Than came to theym syr Guy Delalaunde, holdynge the ladye of Rossylon by the hande, & said to Arthur: Syr, I haue before thys tyme promysed you, that I should shew you my ladye of Rossylon: syr, beholde her, for here shee is nowe present before you. And whan Arthur sawe her, he made great ioye of her, and promysed her faithfully to be alway her owne knyght. And she agayne right highly thanked hym, & all other ladyes & damoysselles affectuously beheld hym, and required him that he would take the payne to vnarme him amonge them; for thei sayd, that thei woulde fayne se hym vnarmed; and somewhat for curtesye, he with said their desyre. But fynally they desyred hym soo affectuously, that nedes he was fayne to agre to their requeste: & whan he was vnarmed, he was of bodye right maruailous fayre and gentyl to beholde; for he was bygge, longe,

and streyght. Than these ladies behelde him maruaylousli, and said eche to other, how that she should be right happy y^t myghte haue suche a knight to her loue. And all these countesses & great ladies wysshed eche of them that he might haue ben partayninge to theyr lordes. Than a ladye brought to him warme water in a basin of syluer, to wasshe his necke and visage, because of the sweting in his harneys. And the lady of Rossylon put a mantell of scarlet aboute hym, the whiche was pertaining to the Couëtesse of Neuers, to the entent he shuld take no colde after his labour: and so he remayned a good space amonge them, and fynally toke his leue. Thā the ladyes desyred him that he wold be their knight, and that he would suffre his harneis to remayne styl amonge them tyl he had nede therof, and that he would vouchesaue to were the mantell of scarlet styll on him. And Arthur dyd graunte them theyr desyre, and so moūted on his horse, and all his company, and rode forthe, tyll at the laste he mette with all the hole assemble of bothe parties, and there was the yonge King of Malogres, and all the other foure erles, and the Dolphyn, and fyue hundred other knyghtes. Than the yonge kynge sayde to Arthur: Syr, ye be ryght hartely welcome, as he that is the floure of all chyualry, & the best knyghte of all the worlde; & there he desyred hym greatly to abyde with him, and that they myghte be companions togider euer after, & frendes. But Arthur excused hym as well as he myght. And all this season he had on the fresshe mantell of scarlet, wherein he semed bygge, and longe, and meruaylously streyght, and fayre; & generally all y^e knyghtes behelde hym, & sayde, how that he was hyely rewarde of God, for he was fayre, & hardy, & of his chiualry surmoūted all other: for thei all sayde, that the valure of al other knyghtes wer as nothing to the regard of his noblesse.





CAP. XXX.

HOW THAT THE MARSHALL OF MYRPOYS FOR ENUI THAT HE HAD
BICAUSE THAT ARTHUR HAD THE HONORE OF THE TOURNAY,
AND BYCAUSE HE HAD BETEN HIM DOWNE, FOR HE HAD
WENDE HYMSELFE TO HAUE BEN THE BEST KNYGHT OF THE
WORLDE; THEREFORE HE DEFYED ARTHUR, AND CHALENGED
HYM TO JUSTE. AND HOWE THAT ARTHUR VANQUYSSHED HYM,
& BRAKE ONE OF HIS ARMES, AND TWO RYBBES IN HYS SYDE.

THAN the marshall, who had his hart enflamed w^t greate yre,
bycause that Arthur had put hym to the worse, and also bycause
he herde so moche good and honour spoken of hym, wherof he
had so great enuy in his harte, and so great despyte, that he could
not holde hym selfe in rest, for he bileued hym selfe to be the best
knyght of the worlde: than openly he spake so hygh and lowde,
that euery knyght mighte here hym, and Arthur also, sayeng in
this maner of wyse: Certainly this straunge knight can not swoune,
whan he is ledde by the hande with fayre ladyes and damoysselles,
and clothed with their mantelles: he lacketh noo thyng but a
softe pelowe, to playe theron with some of these damoysselles.
And whan Arthur herde hym, he answered, and sayd: Syr, yf these
ladyes take me by the hande, I thanke them therof; for it is by
theyr courtesye, and not by my deseruyng: therfore I loue theym
the better, and wyll be the gladder for to serue them, and to be a
faythfull knight to theym al in general. For, as God helpe me,
so moche is a knyght worth as he can deserue prayse of ladyes
and damoysselles. And the marshall, full of yre, answered: In
fayth, as for you, ye be but lytell worth, and that semeth well, whan
ye are fayne to take the reuersion of these ladyes olde clothynge.
Well, syr, sayd Arthur, as for all that, loke, what so euer they do
to me, I am ryght well content therwith: I thynke I haue no thinge
of yours: yf I haue, take it fro me yf ye dare. Certaynly, sayd
the marshal, if ye had ony thyng of myn, soo wolde I do; thynke

not the contrary; for I wolde not spare neyther for you nor for none other to take it, grudge therat who wolde. Than Arthur, all smylige, sayd: Well, syr, than I am ryght happy that I haue noo thyng of youres; for yf I had, me thynketh I sholde not kepe it longe by your wyl. And whā the marshall sawe hym smyle, he thought he dyde it for despyte of hym, and sayd: Syr, wyll ye do so moche for all these ladyes sakes, that ye and I may playe togyder with two fayre speres? Syr, sayd Arthur, ye be so valyaunt a man, that ye ought not to be refused nor denied for so litell a request. Than the marshal was blamed of the kige and of all the other knyghtes, and they wolde full fayne haue letted these justes, bycause they thoughte that Arthur was wery of the labour which he had in the tournay before. But the marshall sayd: He hath promysed it me, and therefore, yf it please hym, I trust he wyl not fayle me: yf he doo, I wyll say that he is recreaunte. Naye, sayd Arthur, by the fayth that I owe vnto God, I wyll not fayle you. And so euery man prayed God, that the shame might fall vpō the marshall, bicause of his proude disdainefull mynde. Than Arthur demaunded incontinent for his harneis.

Thā syr Guy Delalaunde wente vnto the ladyes tente, and shewed theim how that the marshall had chalenged Arthur to juste with him againe. Than rendred the ladyes to him all hys harneys, and praied God for to giue vnto Arthur the honour of those justes: for thei said, how that the marshal was a fole, and of an outragious wilfull minde; wherfore thei praied vnto God that he shulde spede the worse. Than dame Blaunche sayd to the lady of Rossylō: Madame, I bileue now that your straunge knight shall haue yet, or it be nighte, grete nede of some soft bedde to lye in your chambre, by that tyme my brother hathe brewed a caudel for his heed; for I ensure you he neuer as yet encountred so dere a physycien. Well, madame, sayd the lady of Rossylon, fayre and easely: at the ende shall be seen who shall wyne the wager; as yet ye can make no boost, for ye haue wonne nothing.

Thā Arthur and the marshall both dyde arme them; and whan thei were bothe in the felde ther was brought to them grete speres; and than thei spurred their horses with so great randowne, that the

blode dasht oute of their sydes, for thei were bothe good and redoubted knyghtes; but the marshal was not to be compared vnto Arthur, for sith Arthur was fyrst made knyghte he fered no man lyuynge, wherfore the marshall dyde folye to enterpryse ony thyng agaynst hym; but pryde dooth oftentimes many harmes to his mayster. The marshall at the fyrst course strake Arthur, and brake his spere to his fyste; but Arthur, for all that, moued no more than though there had ben but a rede broken vpon hym. But he strake the marshall soo rudelye, that he bare downe horse and man to the erth. Than began to laugh al the ladyes, and damoysselles, knyghtes, and squyers.

Than the lady of Rossylon sayd to dame Blaunche: Madame, youre broder is not so fell and so outragious as I had wende that he had bene, for he taketh no more of the erth but his owne length: I thynke he slepeth; beholde howe pryuely he lyeth styll. And whan the marshall awoke out of hys traunce, he was sore ashamed in that he was so ouerthrowen, and demaunded yf he had ouerthrowen Arthur: than it was shewed hym naye; wherwith he was ryght sore displeased: yet than agayne he prayed Arthur, on his knyghthode, that he wolde just with hym an other course. But all that euer herde hym thought he played the proude fole, and counseyled hym the countrary: but all that auayled not, for he sayde he wolde nedes yet juste ones agayne. And whan y^e Arthur herde hym of that mynde, he had greate dysdayne thereat, & wexed angry in his herte, to considre his folysh presumptuous mynde, and sayde: Well, if he wyll nedes abyde the seconde, I thynke he wyll gladlye let the thyrde passe. So than they toke muche greater speares than they had before, and in grete yre ranne togyther so egerly, that it semed the earth enfoundred vnder theym: and the marshall stroke Arthur ryghte rudely, for he was a good knyghte, and sheuered his spere all to peces: but Arthur hyt him with his spere, the which was great and bygge, so that the sadell, paytrell, girthes and all brast, and hors and man wente to the groude so rudely, that wyth the fall, the marshal had one of his armes broken, and also two of his rybbes, and his body sore brused, so that he laye styl a greate season without mouynge: and than all the knyghtes that sawe the stroke were gretely abasshed,

and sayd eche to other, how that the marshall was beten downe to the erth both horse and man, and in greate ieopardy of his lyfe.

CAP. XXXI.

HOWE THAT ARTHUR WAS CROWNED TO BE KYNGE OF ALL THE KNYGHTES OF THE TOURNAY; AND THEY PROMYSED HYM FAYTH AND TROUTH, TO SERUE HIM IN DEDES OF ARMES ALWAYSES AND IN EUERY PLACE WHERE AS IT SEMED HIM BEST; AND THE YONGE KYNGE OF MALOGRES DID CROWNE HIM.

THAN whā the marshal was thus ouerthrowē, the ladies dyd laughe, & sayde: Blessed be God! pryde alwayes ouerthroweth his maister. Than the lady of Rossilon sayd vnto the lady Blaunche: Madame, now it semeth that your brother hath loste the wager; it had bene better for hym that he had bene in your chaumbre: he speketh no mo wordes, he hath lytell care now for the flyes, beholde how that he shaketh his legges. Than al the other cōtesses and ladyes that were there present did laughe, and sayd: the pryde of him is now wel abated; God kepe & defende suche a knyghte, that can gyue suche valyaunte strokes. As God helpe me, said the lady Rossilon, the marshall is now in good rest. I trowe he hath lytell lust to remount againe: let him be wel apayed, for now he hathe that he sought for. And so eche of theym spake theyr verdyte. Than the yonge kyng and the other earles came to the marshall, and demaunded of hym howe he dyd. And he answered, and saide: Ryght yll, for I haue two of my rybbes broken, and one of my armes; I praye you, howe dooth Arthur? In good trouthe, sayde the Erle of Beauieu, he is yet in the fylde, where as he entendeth, yf ye wyll goo to hym and breke the thyrd spere. Alas! sayd the marshall, I beleued this daye, in the mornynge, that I had bene the best knyght of y^e





world: for I thoughte that there was none that had ony power in comparison vnto me; but nowe I haue founde my mayster, therefore I requyre you cause hym to come to me. Than the Erle of Beaulieu toke Arthur by the hande, and sayd: Syr, the marshall woulde fayne speake wyth you. In the name of God, sayd Arthur, let vs goo to hym. By that tyme the marshall was layde on a lytell couche that was broughte to hym. And whan he sawe Arthur, he sayde, that all myghte here hym: Syr, ye be to me ryghte hertely welcome, as he that is the chefe floure of all chyualrye; and, syr, I crye you mercy of the greate pryde that I was in, the whyche moued me to iuste with suche a knyght as ye be: verely I was enuious and sorowfull of the noblenes that I herde spoken of you, and therefore I toke on me to iuste wyth you, to the entent to abate your praise and renowne; but suche there be that thynketh to greue other, and the hurte and gryefe tourneth vnto theym selfe: God hath done to me ryghte accordynge to my thoughte, for he hathe broughte me in to the same case that I had thought for to haue you in; therefore, gentyll knyghte, I requyre you to pardon my foly that I haue thought agenst you. And whan Arthur herde hym speake so louyngly, he had greate pyte of his hurte, and sayde: A! syr, I oughte to crye you mercye, bycause that I haue hurte you so sore; wherfore it forthynketh me: wherfore, syr, I pray you to pardon me. Certaynly, syr, sayde the marshall, with all my herte; and I gyue you my voyce of the crownyng of this tournay, as vnto hym that is the best knyghte of al the worlde. Than the kyng sayd: Syr marshall, than ye be accorded that he shall be crowned as the best knight of this tournay. Syr, sayde the marshal, as God helpe me, wyth all my herte. And the kyng sayd: By the fayth that I owe vnto God, he shall haue my voyce and good wyll. And all the other erles sayde, that they were all agreed therto, for he was worthy, and none other. Than came to them all the ladyes and damoysels, and they were all of the accorde that he sholde be crowned as the best knyght of all other. And than y^e crowne was brought forth, and the yonge Kynge of Malogres didde set it on Arthurs head, bye the comyn accorde of all the hole assemble; and they were al

content that he should be kyng of all those knyghtes that were there assembled, & they all profred hym succour and ayde in all places, and agenst al people, and as often as he wolde commaunde them. Thus they remayned in great feest and joye well the space of fyftene dayes, with al maner of pastaunce sownynge to noblenes.

CAP. XXXII.

HOWE THAT ARTHUR AFTER HIS CROWNACYON TOKE LEUE OF THE YONGE KYNGE, AND OF ALL THE OTHER LORDES AND KNIGHTES, LADYES AND DAMOYSELLES, WHO CONUAYED HYM ON HYS JOURNAYWARDE, AND HAD GREAT SOROW TO LEUE HIS COMPANY.

At the end of the .xv. dayes, Arthur toke leue of the kinge, and of all the erles & ladies, who were not wel content of his departing. And the kyng sayd: Ryght dere syr and frend, I requyre you as hartelye as I can, that ye wyl go with me into my coultre, and I promyse you faythfully as a kyng, y^t ye and I shal be in all thynges as cōpanions and frendes; and I shall loue you ryght derely, & wyll gyue you londe so great and good, that ye shall be ryght wel content therwith: mine owne swete frende, I requyre you graunt me my desyre: and therwyth he enbraced and kyssed hym. And whan Arthur hearde hym, he smyled, & sayde: Myn owne dere lord, I thanke you, and wolde to God mooste puyssaunt that I might do as ye desyre me; for it were grete joye to me to abyde in your noble company, if it were not for one thyng that I haue enterprysed, and as yet I wote not well what it is, nor where to fynde it, but as mine aduenture happenneth. I haue taryed here very longe, therefore now it is time that I departe. And whan they herde that he wolde nedes go, they were ryght sorowfull; and the kyng and all other offred hym to go in his company, to helpe and ayde hym to attayne his enqueste: but

Arthur wolde not consente therto, and said, that he wold haue no company but suche as came wyth hym. Yes, syr, sayde the kynge, ye shall haue with you Bawdewyn, my squyer; and I wyll delyuer hym to you for good and true, for I wyll vndertake he woulde rather dye, than his mayster sholde take ony hurte or domage in his defaute; & also he knoweth the vertues of all herbes, for he is a souerayne surgyon. In the name of God, sayd Arthur, I am contente to take hym of you, and for his conning I wyll loue him better thā two thousande poūd of yerely londe. Than Arthur, Hector, Gouvernar, Bawdewyn, and Jaket, toke of euery mā coungy and leue, and departed and entred in to theyr journey; and Bawdewyn and Jaket rode before: Hector and Gouvernar rode togider, and Arthur betwene them. And as they rode they comoned of the grete valure of the yonge Kynge of Malogres, & of the other erles and knyghtes, ladyes and damoysselles, and of the grete honour that they had amonge them. In this maner they rode euery daye, the space of thre wekes, w^tout fyndyng of ony aduenture wher of any mencyon is made.

CAP. XXXIII.

HOW ARTHUR AND HIS COMPANY ARYUED IN THE ERLEDOME OF BREWLE, MARCHYNGE AGENST THE LONDE OF SOROLOIS, & ENTRED INTO THE CYTE OF BREWLE, THE WHICHE WAS BESYEGED BY THE DUKE OF ORGOULE NAMED MALAQUYS, BYCAUSE Y^e ERLE WOLD NOT LET HIM HAUE HIS DOUGHTER IN MARYAGE, WHEREFORE BY FALSE TRESON HE SLEWE THE ERLE.

At the ende of the .iii. wekes, Arthur and hys company entred into the erldome of Brewle, agenst the londe of Soroloys, and of this erledome there was an erle, a noble of hauoyre and of frendes, and reputed ryghte wyse, and had to wyfe a noble ladye and a vertuous, who hadde to name the gentyll Isabell, and had betwene

them two a fayre and a gracyous doughter named Alyce. Joynynge to thys erledome there marched a duchy, wherin there was a duke whiche was named Malaquys, a cruel man and an enuyous. And thys duchy was called Orgoule, and thys duke had often and manye tymes demaunded of this erle his doughter dame Alyce to haue in maryage; but the erle, nor the good lady his wyfe, wolde in no maner of wyse graunte therto, bycause of the euyll condycyons that were wythin this duke. And whan that the duke sawe that he coulde not gette this fayre lady Alyce, he bare than in his herte grete heate and enuy to the erle her father: in soo muche, that at the last thys duke had knowlege, vpon a daye, howe that the erle was gone to chase in the forest. And therby hys prepenched malyce caused this earle shamefully for to be slayne and murdered. And whan that the erle was thus myschenously slayne, he was brought home to his wyfe, whiche was ryght sorowfull for his deth, & made hym to be honourably buryed. But this sorowfull lady in noo wyse coulde veryly tell how that he was slayne, but she had grete suspecte to the duke. And soo within halfe a yere after, the duke came vnto this countesse, and demaunded of her dame Alyce her doughter: but the countesse, bycause she had hym in suspecte of the dethe of the erle her husbonde, wolde in no maner of wyse graunte therto; nor also this fayre mayden Alyce wolde in noo wyse haue hym, but wolde rather to dye therfore. And whan the duke perceiued that he might not haue her at his pleasure, he had grete despyte therof, and soo defyed the countesse, and assembled a grete hoost and besyged the cyte of Brewle, and wasted al the countre rounde aboute a greate circuyte, and made hys auowe that he woulde not departe thens tyll that he had wonne her by force.

And in thys meane season, Arthur and his company arryued in that countre, and the duke had layen at the syege as than the space of a yere before the cyte, accompanied wyth foure hundred knyghtes besydes other seruantes. And thus Arthur and his company rode throughe thys countrye, the whyche he founde all exyled and put to wast, and mette wyth much people fleyng out of the lande, whereof he was gretly ameruayled, and demaunded of two vytaylers that he mette, ledynge of vytayle to the hoost,

What was the cause of the exile and wasting of that countre? And they answered hym, how that the Duke of Orgoule hadde wasted it in suche wyse. Ye, frēdes, sayd Arthur, and I pray you for what cause? Syr, sayd they, that wil not we tell you, for we haue nede to sel our vytaile, to wyn thereby our sustenaūce, and therefore it behoueth vs not to saye yll nor to accuse ony persone; but yf ye wyl knowe, ye may wete of this people that ye se fleynge oute of the countree. Than Arthur demaunded of theym the cause, and they shewed hym howe that the Duke of Orgoule demaunded in maryage the erles doughter, and how that he caused the erle to be slayne by treason, bycause he wolde not agree to his desyre, and as now hath besyged the countesse in her cyte of Brewle, and hath wasted all the countree. And whan Arthur herde all this, he sayd: Syrs, God spede and helpe you all. And whan he was riden ferre from theym, he sayd to Hector his cosyn: Cosyn, how saye you, what is best that we shall doo? Syr, sayd Hector, in the name of God let vs enter into this warre. I alowe it wel, sayd Arthur; but we wyll not ayde this duke who is in the wronge, and hath the better hande. Nay, said Hector, that is not myn entent; let vs ayde them that be within the cyte, who be in grete jeopardie, and nye put under: wherfore they are in ryghte grete fere: and this, in my mynde, is best for vs to doo, for they ben in the ryght, wherfore God wyl helpe and socour vs. By the good Lorde, sayd Arthur, it is wel sayd, and so wyl we do. But how shall we enter in to the cyte, syth that this duke hath besyged it rounde aboute. Well, quod Gouvernar, we muste enter by one waye or other.

And thus they rode forth, tyll at the laste they espyed the cyte of Brewle, the which was ryght hye and stronge, with hyghe walles and myghty toures, and rounde aboute the cyte they sawe tentes and paulyons pyght, and glysterige of standardes, and streamers wauerynge wyth the wynde, and moche people wel arayed for the warre. Than sayde Arthur: Frenedes, this duke besemynge hath moche people; I wyll gooe and speke wyth hym or I entre in to the cyte. Ye saye ryght well, sayd Hector, to the entente that ye may knowe hym the better another tyme,

yf it fortune you to encounter wyth hym in the felde. So they rode forth streyght vnto the great tent of the dukes, and there they founde hym standynge wythout the sayd tente, commaūdyng to hys seneshall, that the nexte daye betymes he should make assaute to the cyte wyth thre hundred halbardes. And wyth those wordes Arthur and his company lyghted of theyr horses, and salewed the duke full goodly. And whan the duke sawe theym, he praysed theym gretly in his herte, and courteysly dydde salewe them agayne. Syr, sayde Arthur, we are departed from our cuntrye, for we herde spekyng of this warre that ye haue moued. And we thre knyghtes of Fraunce wolde gladly serue some noble man, and be retayned to him for his wages. In the name of God, sayde the duke, ye be hyder ryghte hertely welcome: and thoughe it be so that I haue people suffycyente, yet wyll I be ryghte gladde to retayne you all to be of my house, and to haue wages, mete and drynke, hors and harneys, and all that ye can conquere of youre enemyes shal be youre owne. Syr, sayd Arthur, I thanke you; of this mater I shal speke wyth my company and knowe theyr myndes. But, syr, I requyre you, agaynst whome shall we haue to doo? As God be my helpe, sayde the duke, agaynst the cyte, wherein there is a lady who hath refused to gyue me her doughter in maryage, wherfore I wyll wyne her bi force. A! syr, said Arthur, how long hathe it bene that ye haue assyged thys cyte? Verely, sayd y^e duke, it is now more than a yere; but I wyll abyde here this seuen yere but I will wyne it. Well, sir, sayd Arthur, herde ye ony thyng of late from this lady, wheder she wyll agre to your desyre or not? Nay, in good trouth, sayd the duke, I herde not from them a grete season. Well, syr, sayd Arthur, peraduenture this lady repenteth her that she hath not fulfilled your wyl: for now at the ende she knoweth better her own foly than she dydde in the begynnyng, and euer the lenger the better shall she know how that her londe is wasted, & she may wel se how that she is enclosed wythin the cyte, and wasteth her goodes; and her people also, by all lykelyhod, are gretely noyed with so longe beyng in a maner in pryson; soo all these thynges ought to moue her to fulfill your desyre. Syr, sayde the duke, it is of a

trouth al y^t ye say ; how be it, I thynke there is none of her counsaile that sheweth her so moche reason, or elles they wyll not shew it her : for, syr, syth ye haue sayde so moche as ye haue done, I wyll desyre and praye you to doo soo moche, as to shewe her as muche as ye haue done to me : for ye be as yet indifferēt, for ye are of neyther partye, therfore ye maye speke to her the more boldlyer : and if that she wyll not agree, let her be in certayne I wyll take her by force, and brenne her in my syghte. Syr, ye haue ryghte soo to do, sayd Arthur ; and syth it pleaseth you that I shall goo in thys message, I am ryght well content so to doo.

Than Arthur and hys felawshyp mounted vpō theyr horses and rode towarde the citie. Than Hector sayd : Syr, where is youre scutchon of armes on your brest ? for ye be a good purseuaunt : thinke to furnish well your message. Ye, syr, sayd Gouvernar, this duke hath a riche messenger, he ought to gyue hym good wages ; so thus they rode forth, talkynge and sportyng them tyll they came to one of the gates of the citie, and knocked therat so longe, tyll at the last the porter opened a lytle wyndowe, and there he saw thre knyghtes all armed and well horsed, and he demaunded of them what they sought. Arthur answered, and sayd : We be messengers, sent from the duke for to spek wyth the lady, gouernour of this citie. Syr, sayd the porter, suffre a lytle space, and I wyl go and speke with her. Than the porter wente to the lady, who was as than among her barons and knyghtes, and Alyce her fayre doughter in her company. Than the porter sayd : Madame, pleaseth it you to knowe, howe that there is at the gate thre goodly knyghtes armed, the fayrest that euer I sawe, and they saye that they ben messengers come to speke wyth you from the duke : therfore loke what it shall please you to cōmaunde me to answer theym. Than syr Othes, who was cosyn germayn to the lady, sayd : Madame, me thinketh it were well done to let them come in, syth they be messengers. In the name of God, sayd the lady, open the gates to theym, & let them enter. Than the porter tourned agayne to the gate and suffered thē to enter. Than whā Arthur was within the cyte, he sawe grete plente of sheldes and speres, horse & harnays, knyghtes and squyers, and grete and

myghty straunge houses full of greate riches; than in his herte he praysed moche this cyte. And al the knyghtes of the cyte behelde these thre knyghtes as they rode, and sayd eche to other: What knyghtes be these, or fro whens come they? & some answered, and sayd, how that they could not tell: and some sayd they were messengers sente from the duke; but what soo euer thei be, thei are meruaylous fayre knyghtes.

And thus thei rode forthe to the palays, and there lyghted fro their horses, and wente vp in to the hall, and there thei founde the countesse and her barony aboute her. Than the countesse, and her doughter Alyce, and all her barons, arose against Arthur, and welcomed hym, and caused him to syt downe by her, and the fayre lady Alyce and Hector, & syr Othes and Gouvernar. Than Arthur said: Madame, we be comen hither from the Duke of Orgoule, who demaundeth of you that ye shuld gyue to hym in mariage my ladye Alyce youre doughter; &, madame, me thinketh that diuerse reasons ought for to moue you thus to do. Fyrste ye ought to consyder howe ye shall set her in a ryght hye and honourable place. Also ye se wel y^e grete number of people, & the strength whiche he hath, and howe that youre londe is destroied and wasted, and al the people therof put to exyle. Also ye ought for to cōsider, how that ye be locked and enclosed here in this cite, and al your noble knyghtes & gentylmen are in grete peryll of their lyues, and leseth theyr tyme & substaunce, the whiche is righte grete damage vnto them; so, madame, all these thinges, and many other wisely considered, ought for to moue you to accomplyshe this his desyre, syth thys desyre is but for your honoure, and no shame; therefore, madame, may it please you to gyue an answer, what is your wyll in this behalfe? Syr, said the lady, I wyl geue to you an answer shortly, without taking of any other counseyle. Rather than I should geue my doughter to a false murtherer, and specially to hym that by false treason hathe slayne her fader, as God helpe me, I wolde rather suffre to be brent to powder. For gladder woulde I be to gyue her to the poorest grome or page in all my house than to hym. But, syr, I requyre you tel me, wheder ye be any of the knyghtes retaining with the duke or not? Madame, sayde

Arthur, I am not retainyng as yet with him, nor with none other, for I and my companye are knyghtes errauntes, who haue forsaken our own countrees to seke aduentures; and by fortune we are aryued into this dukes hoost, who wold gladly haue vs retayned in this his warre against you. Sir, said the countesse, I wote not what ye be, nor of what lynage or countre ye be of, but it semeth to me, that ye be extraught out of some noble house and lignage. Therefore, syr, yf it would please you to helpe to deliuer vs oute of this thraldome, and defēde vs from our enemies, I wil giue you my doughter, for to do with her what it shall please you, sauing her honoure. Ye, madame, sayde Arthur, and is that your mynde? Wyll ye put her into my handes, to mary her wheresomeuer it shall please me, and to put all your trust into me in that behalfe? Ye, syr, truely with all my herte, sayd the couētesse. And how say ye, faire lady Alyce, wyll ye agre to this? Than Alyce beheld Arthur, & perceiued right wel how he was fayre and gracious, & said: Syr, I wyl accomplysshe the wyl of my moder. Well, madame, quod Arthur, than wyll it please you to knowe of all your noble barons and knyghtes, whether thei wyll accorde that I shall haue your noble doughter in maryage, or elles for to mary her wheresomeuer it shall please me? Syr Othes, sayde the lady, ye be nere of her lynage, call togyder al my barons and my knyghtes, and speke with them of this mater to know theyr mīdes.

Than they all entred in to a grete hall, and there they comoned of this mater, and dyuerse opynions there were amonge them; but fynally they were all agreed, and put theyr sayenge on syr Othes, the whiche sayenge they all promised to kepe ferme and stable.

Than they all came before the lady and Arthur: and there syr Othes sayd: Madame, we perceyue it is your wyl to gyue my lady Alice, your doughter, to this knyght, eyther for hymselfe, or elles to gyue her where so euer as it shall please hym best. Madame, we be all accorded vnto your mynde, that he shall haue her hymselfe, yf it pleaseth hym, in maryage, or elles to gyue her vnto an other, where as he thynketh beste, soo that she be not thereby abbated of her noblenesse and estate. Verely, syr, sayde Arthur, I shall bestow her in as grete a place and lignage, or greter,

than she is of her selfe. Than they all answered, and sayde: We desyre nothyng els. Well, madame, sayd Arthur, are ye than agreed, & my ladye youre doughter also? And they answered bothe, that they were bothe well contente. In the name of God, sayd Arthur, howe saye you all, my lordes, are ye agreed therto also? And thei all answered with one voice, and sayde: Syr, we be ryghte well contente, and promyse you faythfullye, that ye shall haue helpe and ayde of vs, and of ours, to the vttermost of our powers. Well, syrs, sayd Arthur, I thanke you as hertely as I can for your good wyll; and, as God helpe me, I shall bestowe her in suche a place, where as she shal be more better content than with the Duke of Orgoule, who would full gladly haue her: therefore, fayre ladye Alyce, come hyder to me. Than the mayden rose, and came to hym. And he ryghte louingly toke her in his armes, and said vnto her: Fayre lady Alyce, from hence forthe ye shall be my doughter, my cosyn, and my loue. Cosyn Hector, aryse and come hyder to me. Then Hector came to hym. And Arthur sayd to hym: Myne own good cosyn Hector, I put you in possession of this fayre mayden. And wyth greate honoure and ioye I frely gyue her to you, to haue in maryage, and all suche rychesse as we may gete of the Duke of Orgoule, yf it be our fortune for to dyscomfyte hym, as I trust to God we shall; and I giue it frely vnto you. And as vnto you, fayre lady Alyce, syth he hath slayne your fader by false treason, I promyse to you, therfore, his head for a recompence. Syr, sayd the damoyzell, humbly I thanke you of that gyfte, for I had rather haue that than to be made a quene. But, syr, I requyer you tell me what is this gentyll man to whyche ye haue gyuen me vnto? Madame, sayd Arthur, as God helpe me, he is of hye lygnage and of great blode: for I ensure you he is sone and heyre vnto the Erle of Bloys, who is a greate lord and a moche redoubted. And whan that the countesse, and her doughter, and all her lordes, herde that, they were ryght gladde, and sayd, howe that God hadde vysyted them. Than Hector ryght hartely thanked Arthur of hys gyfte of the fayre ladye Alyce. And in the same houre they were fyaunced togyder. And than began there a great feest, and great ioye was made

throughout all the cite. Than the tables were set to goo to diner, and whan they were set thei were ryghte rychely serued. And after dyner they sported them togider tyl it was time to goo to theyr restes. In the nexte mornyng Arthur rose betymes and herde masse, & than wente vp to the palays, where he founde all the barons redy apparayled; and there was Hector, and Gouvernar, & syr Othes. Than Arthur sayd: Fayre lordes, I promysed yester-daye too the duke, whan I departed fro hym, that I shoulde haue retourned to hym agayne the same nyght, to shewe hym the wyll and entent of my lady the countes; therefore I wyll go now to hym al alone, and shew hym his answe: for all ye shall abyde here styll tyl I come agayne, therefore get me my harneys; & so anone it was broughte to him, and there he armed hym. Than Hector sayd playnly he would go w^t hym; but Arthur bad him neuer speke therof, yf he wold haue hys loue and fauour.

CAP. XXXIV.

HOWE THAT ARTHUR WENTE ALONE TO THE DUKE OF ORGOULE, & GAUE HIM HIS ANSWER, & BADE HIM ABYDE NO LINGER FOR THE FAYRE ALYCE. FOR HE SHEWED HYM HOW Y^t HE HAD GIUEN HER TO HECTOR HIS COSYN; AND HOW THAT HE HAD PROMYSED TO HER HYS HEAD BYCAUSE HE SLEWE HER FADER BY TREASON: WITH THE WHICHE ANSWERE THE DUKE WAS SORE DYSPLEASED, SO MUCHE THAT THERE WAS BITWENE THEM A GREAT BATAYLE.

THAN whan Arthur was mouëd on his horse, he issued oute of the cite all alone. Than Hector said to Gouvernar and syr Othes: Frêdes, let vs take oure harneys, for I fere me leest Arthur shall haue somewhat to do or he com agayne. Ye haue ryghte well sayde, quod Gouvernar; and thei armed them, and so dyde all the

men of warre y^t were in the cyte. And whā they were all armed, they wente to the batylmentes of the walles to behold the demenour of Arthur, who as than had rode so ferre, that he descended fro his horse at the dukes tent. And there he sayd to the duke: Syr, verely I answer you, how ye nede not to tary here ony lenger for y^t fayre lady Alyce: for certaynely I ensure you I haue gyuen her to my cosyn Hector, and al the lond that belongeth to her both by fader and mother: therefore, syr, in fayre meanes I require you to depart hastely out of this countre; and yf ye wyll not, I haue promised to y^t fayre damoyssel Alyce to rendre to her youre heed in recompence, bycause ye slewe her fader by false treason. Than the duke was so sorowful and replete with displeasure, y^t of a grete space he coude speke no worde. Than the duke had by hym a cosyn germayne, who sayd to Arthur: Sir knyght, ye do greate outrage to demaūde the head of my lorde the duke: but by the fayth that I ow vnto hym, in the fyrste place that euer I mete you in, I shall make hym a present of your heed. Ye, sir, sayd Arthur, & why wyll ye abyde so longe, syth ye may do it now, yf ye can? Wherfore, beholde me, I am here present; mounte vp shortely on your horse, and ye shall soone mete with me. Ye say ryght well, sayd the knyght; get me my harneys; and so armed hym. And Arthur than mounted on hys hors, and he espyed wel where there stode before the dukes tent a gret spere, the whiche he toke in his hande, and withdrew hym from the tente to abyde the knight. And so when the knyght was armed he lepte on his hors, & sawe where Arthur was abyding for hym. And Hector, as he was vpon the wal of the cyte, said to Gouvernar: Syr, it semeth my cosyn Arthur shal not come againe without justes. Than the knight ranne to Arthur, and he to him; and they mette so rudely, that the knight brake his spere, but Arthur hyt hym so impetously, y^t the spere heed entred into his herte, wherwith he fell downe dead to the erth. And whan the dukes knyghtes, being in theyr tentes, sawe him fal downe dead, they were sore displeased. And also thys knyghte had .v. knyghtes to his brethren in the dukes hoost, and they armed theym al at ones to renne at Arthur.

CAP. XXXV.

HOW HECTOR, & GOUERNAR, & SIR OTHES, RODE OUT OF THE CYTE, WELL ACCOMPANYED, TO RESCOWE ARTHUR, WHO ALONE ASSAYLED THE DUKE OF ORGOULE AND ALL HIS ARMYE.

AND whan Hector saw them of the dukes hooste ranne to theyr harneys, he sayde vnto Gouvernar: Frēde, let vs issue out shortly. And syr Othes delyuered the chefe standarde of the cyte to syr Lyonet, his neuewe, & so yssued out of the citie in good order, & well renged in battayle. And whan Arthur saw the foresayd fyue knyghtes cominge to himward, he dasht his spurres into his hors, & encountred so with the fyrst, that he thrust his spere thugh his body, and so he fell downe deade. Than he set his hand to his swerd, and strake therwith so the seconde, that he claue his head nye to hys chynne. And fro the thyrde he berafte his sholder with the arme, for all togyder flew into the felde. And whan syr Othes sawe suche meruaylous strokes as he gaue, he sayd: Saynte Marye! what knyght is this? He is the best of al the world! God defende hym from onye vilany! Verely hys strokes are gretly to be doubted, for they are ryght heuy. And whan y^e duke saw his knyghtes so slayne all onely by one man, he was righte sore displeased, & cried fast to his knyghtes: Syrs, to harneys! Than the moost parte of the hoost shortly mouēd vpon theyr horses, and ranne all vpon Arthur by plumpes, here .x. and there .xx. And whan Hector saw that, he pricked forth his horse as rudely as though y^e thōder had dryuen hym. And whan syr Othes saw y^e he ran so hastely, he saide: By my fayth, it semeth he wyl not recule backe agayne, sythe he seketh for his enemyes so hastely. And Hector encountred the fyrst so vertuously, y^e he ran him thugh out with his spere, and so he fell downe dead: and than he drew hys sworde, and strake of the head of an other; and layde aboute hym in the thickest of the prese, & gaue such strokes, that

he slewe knyghtes, and draue down horses, that it was meruayle to beholde. And whan Arthur saw him, he smiled, and sayd: A! good cosyn, ye folowe ryght well after your lygnage. And Gouernar, at hys comige, bet downe all about hym what soo euer he attayned to, that it was wōder to beholde. And whā Arthur sawe them, he said: I oughte neuer to fayle these knyghtes, seth they take such payne to rescow me: verely, by the grace of God, I shall helpe and ayde them. And by that tyme there were agaynste theim many of the dukes knyghtes: and Arthur strake amonge them, that the first that he encountred he claue his vysage downe to hys necke; & layde on so rounde aboute hym, that he made to flye into the fyelde handes, armes, and heades: and sheuered sheldes, and vnbarred helmes, and maymed many knyghtes, and bette them downe on euerye syde, so that he made all to tremble that were before hym, for there was non that abode his stroke without deth or greuouse woundes. Than sir Othes had grete maruayle of the noblenesse of these knyghtes, and specially of the chyualry of Arthur, and sayd to his neuw, syr Lyonet: As God helpe me, these knyghtes are able to discomfyte the duke & all his hoost, w^tout ony more helpe. And al this season, the cōtesse, and the fayre lady Alyce her doughter, were mounted on the walles of the cyte, to beholde the noble dedes of these .iii. knyghtes. Thā the lady sayde to her doughter Alyce: Beholde your lorde and his companyons: I trowe there be noo moore suche in all the world: behold how they dryue asonder the grete preses, and how the knyghtes flye before them for feare; but specyally beholde Arthur, who I thynke be chefe floure of all chyualry. God of his grace hath well prouyded for vs whan he sente them into this cuntrye. Ryght dere lady & moder, sayde Alyce, me thynketh Hector is wel armed, and demeneth hymselfe ryght goodly. Well, doughter, sayd the lady, doth he please you? Ye, verely, madame, sayde she. Ye haue a good cause, doughter, so to be, for among our enemies he is a good bocher of his handes.

And by that tyme the duke hymselfe was come to that scar-mysshe, accompanied with .v. hondred men of warre. And than syr Othes and all the hoost of the cyte assembled togyder, and

foughte wyth the duke. There began a great mortall batayle betwene bothe partyes, but the dukes company was more in number than them of the cyte, & therefore they suffred mucche payne, in so moche that syr Othes was ouerthrowen & taken prisoner. And whan that syr Lionet, his neuewe, sawe that, he let fall the chefe baner whiche he bare. And whan Arthur espied that, he was neuer so sory, and came to syr Lyonet, and demaunded of hym, why he dyd let fal the baner? And he answered, and sayde: Sir, bicause myne vnkle, syr Othes, was taken prysoner. Saint Mary! sayde Arthur, defende that; but where is he? As God helpe me, syr, he is ledde forth in yonder gret prease that ye se yonder. Well, saide Arthur, lifte vp agayne the baner, for by the grace of God he shall be shortly rescowed.

Than Arthur dressed hym thyderward, and mette wyth Hector and Gouvernar, and sayd: Syrs, let vs go rescowe syr Othes, who is taken prisoner. Than rusht they all in to the prease: and Arthur mette so wyth the fyrst, that he caste hym downe to the erth starke dead; & layde so on euery syde, that they made hym a large way where so euer he went. And Hector and Gouvernar dyd greatly to be redoubted, for they made greate plenty of sadels to be auoyded; so that all that sawe Arthur and his company sayd: These be noo men, they be fiendes of helle! let vs flee frome them: for shame haue he y^e fyrst brought them into this countrye! And whan the duke sawe these thre knyghtes do suche wonders meruayles in armes, and slew so great plente of his knyghtes, he was so sore dyspleased, that he was nye therwyth fro him selfe: and therwyth dashte to Hector, and strake hym so rudely, that he perced both his shelde and hys helme. And whan Hector felte that rude stroke, he was not wel content, and lifte vp his swerde and strake the duke so fyerslye therwith, that the swerde sanke through out hauberte, shielde, and helme, and entred depe into the flesshe. In the meane tyme Arthur came to theym, and there he sawe the duke & Hector fyersly fyghtynge togyder. Than Arthur strake the duke so sore, that the arson of his sadell coude not kepe hym, but that he wente to the groude. Than Gouvernar toke the dukes horse and delyuered it to Hector, for his owne was sore wounded, and

very faynt for bledynge; and so Hector forsoke his owne and mounted therō hastely. Than the dukes company came to rescowe hym, and so there began a sore and a terryble batayle, for there was many slayne and sore wounded: but finally y^e duke with mucche payne was rescowed, and right sore hurte, borne he was into his tent. Than the night drewe on, so that both parties withdrew eche fro other; the duke and hys company went into theyr tentes, and Arthur and hys felowshyp repayred towarde the cyte. And as they wente, they sawe betwene the wood and the cyte the dukes senesshall goinge to make assaute to the cyte wyth .iii. hundred men in harneys. And whan syr Othes perceyued the senesshal, he shewed him to Arthur, and sayde: Syr, se yonder where as is syr Clarembaulte, senesshall to the duke, goynge to assayle the cyte. Verelye, sayde Arthur, me thynketh it is very late, yet I wyl ryde to hym. A! gentil knight, said syr Othes, dele not to hardly with hym, for he is a good knyght, & as gentel as ony liueth; therefore it were great hurte yf he were slayne: and, syr, your strokes are very heuy, for there is none that can endure thē; therefore, syr, for Goddes sake let syr Hector fyrst encounter hym. Wyth a ryghte good wyll, sayde Hector; & so he spurred his horse & escryed the senesshall. And whan he herde hym, lyke a good knyght, he ranne at Hector, and mette so rudely, that Hector ouerthrewe hym horse and man at the fyrst course. Than hys seruytoure ranne to haue rescowed hym; but than Arthur and Gouvernar were there present, and delte amonge theym suche almes, that it was wonder to beholde: & wyth cleane force Arthur toke syr Clarēbault prysoner, and dyde incontynente send hym to the cyte vnto the countesse, who was ryght gladde of suche a prysoner, and caused hym to be vnarmed in all haste, and made hym to mount vpon the wall wyth her, for to beholde how her knyghtes dyd demeane them selfe amonge there enemyes; and there syr Clarembault sawe how Arthur dyd meruayles, for he claue asōder sheldes, & draue downe knyghtes, and cut of armes, handes, and heades. Also Hector and Gouvernar for theyr partes dyd meruaylously well, so that nothings endured before them. Sayncte Marye! sayde Clarembaulte to the countesse: madame, where gete

you these knyghtes, for, as God helpe me, they are the best of all the world: for if ye had but these thre knyghtes, they were able to chase out of your coultre the duke and all his hoost. Syr, sayd the lady, God hath puruayed me of theym. And fynally, Arthur, Hector, Gouvernar, and syr Othes, dydde suche meruayles of armes, that all the dukes company that were wyth syr Clarembaulte were clene dyscomfyted; and there Arthur toke .xl. prysoners, and dydde send them into the cyte, and other .xl. fledde and ranne to the duke, & all the remanaunt of .iiii. hondred were slayne. And whan they were before the duke, & many of theym sore hurte, they sayde: A! syr, it gooth yll wyth you and vs, for syr Clarembault, youre senessall, is taken prysoner, and .xl. other knyghtes with hym, & all the remenaunt slayne, sauynge we, who be ryghte yll delte wythall as ye may se. And the duke demaunded of theym, who it was that had done that dede. As God helpe vs, syr, it was thre knyghtes that was in y^e company with syr Othes, but we trow they be fendes and none erthely men. And whan the duke herd this, he waxed nye madde for anger, and there sware, how that he wolde neuer departe thens fro syege, tyll he had hanged those thre knyghtes, and brente the countesse and her doughter. Than incontynent he sent messengers out to his baylyues, & prouostes, and sent for his brother Peter the Cornu, who shortely came to hymwarde, and brought with hym .iiii. hondred men of warre, & the dukes great courser named Assille; & thys horse was suche, that there was none lyke hym in al the world, for he was named felawlyke to Bucyfal, the horse of Alexander the Greate: there was none that coude moūt on this hors, but al only the duke and the varlet that kepte hym, and both daye and nyght he was euer tied with foure grete chaynes of yren.

CAP. XXXVI.

HOW ARTHUR, HECTOR, GOUERNAR, & SIR OTHES, DISCOMFYTED
 PETER Y^e CORNU, BRODER TO THE DUKE, WHO WAS COMEN TO
 HIM WITH .IIII.C. KNIGHTES, AND THERE THIS CORNU WAS
 SLAYNE, & ALL HYS PEOPLE SLAYNE AND TAKEN PRYSONERS.
 AND HOW ARTHUR TOKE THE DUKES HORS NAMED ASSYLE, Y^e
 BEST HORS AS THAN OF THE WORLDE.

WHAN that Arthur had taken syr Clarēbault the dukes senesshall
 and dyscomfyted all hys people, than he entred into the cite,
 where as the people ran to welcome hym, & said: God kepe the
 in thy strength and vertue, and blessed be the houre that euer thou
 were borne! So thus he camme to the palays, where as the cou-
 tesse and her doughter mette hym, and demaūded of hym howe
 he dyd. And he sayde: Ryght well, thanked be God: and
 Alyce toke Hector her lorde, and vnarmed hym. Than Arthur
 caused all suche as were hurte of the prysoners to be broughte into
 the palays, and caused surgyens to serche theyr woundes, &
 euerye daye he wolde vysyte them thre or foure times, wherby he
 gat him suche loue of euerye creature, that they promysed neuer
 to fayle him as long as they lyued. Than whan Arthur was vn-
 armed, there was in his company Hector, Gouvernar, and syr
 Othes. Than Arthur toke syr Clarembault by the hande, and
 sayd: Syr, make good chere, for ye shall haue here no hurte yf I
 may kepe you therefro, and verely ye shall haue here but a good
 pryson. No, syr, sayde the coutesse, he shall haue no hurte here
 sith it please you the contrarye; whereof he thanked them greatly;
 and all that euer herde Arthurs wordes praysed him moche, and
 loued hym therefore the better. Than they wente to mete, and
 Arthur and syr Clarembault sate bothe togider. Thus Arthur and
 the hole army soiourned styll, without doinge of anye thyng the
 space of a moneth, and by that tyme suche as were hurte were
 recouered to helth. And the duke and all hys hoost in lyke wyse

laye styll, for he abode for more company. Soo it fortun-ed, that on a Wednesday Arthur was rysen betymes, and had herde masse, and stode leanyng in a wyndowe, and loked into the dukes hoost for to se the demenyng of his enemies : and in his company was Hector, Gouvernar, and syr Othes, and Clarembault. At the laste Arthur behelde ouer the foreste, and espyed where there came moche people in harneys downe from a grete mountayne ; he sawe shyeldes and helmes shyne agaynst the sonne, & sawe a great baner waueryng wyth the winde ; and Arthur than shewed this to his company. And at the laste syr Clarembault knew the baner, & sayde : Syr, these people that yonder cometh, are not for your profyte, for it is Peter the Cornu, the dukes broder, who is come to helpe hym. Well, sayde Arthur, he is welcome ; it may fortune he cometh to soone ; therefor, Hector, freende, yf we abyde, and suffre hym to assemble hys company with the dukes hoost, we shall haue than moche to doo : therefore, by my counsayle, let vs go mete with them before in this forest, and let vs shewe them what maner of people we be. Syr, as God helpe me, sayd syr Othes, ye haue ryght wel deuysed ; therfore let vs go arme vs shortly. Syr, sayd Arthur, cause all your people to arme them as pryuely as they can, to thentent that they without maye know nothinge therof ; and let vs enter as priuely as we can in to this forest, that we be not espyed of them that be comynge, and soo shall we be in hande wyth them or they be ware : and as he had deuysed, so it was ordeyned and done : and so rode forth ryghte pryuely in to this forest, and there departed theyr companyes in busshementes, tyll at the laste theyr enemyes were amonge them. Than espyed syr Othes the dukes horse Assyle, who was ledde in hand with his keper, and shewed him to Arthur, and sayde : Syr, beholde yonder is the best horse of al the worlde ; for he was neuer as yet werye for no labour, for who so euer sytteth on hym can take no hurte, he is so myghty and stronge. In the name of God, sayd Arthur, the duke hath done ryghte well to kepe hym soo well for me so longe as he hath done : for, by the fayth that I owe to God, I will go seke hym incontynent. Than Arthur dressed hym towarde the varlet that ledde the horse, and, or he

toke any hede, Arthur toke hym by the sholders, and cast hym flatte to the grounde; than he toke the horse by the brydell and lyghtly dyde lepe on hym; than Arthur assayed hym in the fiede, and foude hym ryght stronge and lyght, wherof he was wondersly gladde, and wolde not forgo hym for moche golde and syluer. And as Arthur thus proued his horse, Peter the Cornu, the dukes broder, espyed hym, and ranne and strake hym behinde vpon his backe or that he was ware. And whan Hector sawe that, he pricked forth towarde hym, and so eche of them ran at other, and mette soo rudely, that Peter the Cornu brake his spere; but Hector marked hym so well, that he put his spere through out the body, and soo fell downe deed yn the same place. And whan that Peter y^e Cornues men sawe that, they assailed Hector on all sydes, & enclosed hym amonge them, and wounded so hys horse that he fell downe vnder hym; but he anone lepte vpon hys fete and nobly defended hym, soo that none durst approche nere hym: but than they dyde cast at hym knyues, and swerdes, and other wepens, and soo wounded hym in dyuerse places. At the last Gouvernar espyed hym, and sayd to Arthur: Syr, for Goddes sake go and socour Hector your cosyn, who is nye at a grete myschefe. And whan Arthur herde that, he spurred his noble horse Assyle and lepte furth .xv. fote of playne grounde, and soo rusht in amonge theym that were in hande wyth Hector, and encountred so the fyrst, that he claue hym downe to the chynne, and an other he carued his heed to his tethe, and made hedes, armes, and handes, flye into the fylde, & therwith all the hole company dashte toggyder, where as there was than a teryble batayle. At the last Gouvernar gate a good hors, and brought him streyght to Hector, who moued shortly theron, and dashte in to the prese, and there dyd meruayles of armes, for he confounded all that euer he attayned vnto. And Arthur and Gouvernar did marueyles for theyr parte, and syr Othes and his companye were not behynde, but they dyd full nobly; and so fynally Arthur and his company bare theym so well, that all theyre enemyes were dyscomfyted; and there were taken prysoners beyonde .iii. score, the whiche were ledde in to the cyte of Brewle: & many fledde awaye sore wounded, and a grete

nombre of theym were slayne. And than Arthur and his felowshyp retourned to the cyte, and there the countesse receyued them ryght courteysly with grete joye and tryumphe. And whan she knewe howe the dukes broder was slayne, and Assyle the good horse wonne, she had greate joye therof, and sayd to Arthur: A! swete frende, ye ouercome myne enemyes one after another: Than syr Clarēbault was right sorowful when he knew of the death of syr Peter the Cornu, & sayd: A! duke, ye haue had but an yllacquayntaūce with this dame, and haue won but lytle therby, and I fere me ye are lyke to lese more; A! good Peter the Cornu! God haue mercy on thy soule! And thus he demeaned greate sorowe, and Arthur dydde as moche as he coulde for to comforte hym. And suche as were escaped from the batayle fledde to the duke, and shewed him how that his broder Peter the Cornu was slayne, & his men slayne and taken, and his good horse Assyle taken, and ledde into the cyte of Brewle; wherwyth the duke was so sorowfull, that he coude not sustayne hym selfe, but fel downe in a traunce; and whan he reuyued, he sayde: A! sweete broder, dere haue ye bought the sekyng of thys countesse, syth ye haue lost your lyfe for her! Than he cōmaunded that the body of his broder sholde be fette and caryed to the cyte of Orgoule; and so it was done; and there he was solempny buried, and the duke bewepete the deth of his brother the space of .viii. dayes continually.

CAP. XXXVII.

HOWE THAT ARTHUR AND HIS COMPANY VTTERLY DYSCOMFITED THE DUKE, AND STRAKE OF HIS HEAD, AND DYDDE SENDE IT BY GOUERNAR TO THE FAYRE LADY ALYCE AND TO HER MODER, AS HE HAD PROMISED BEFORE.

At the ende of .viii. dayes, the duke cōmaunded that all hys people shoulde be armed, and ready apparayled to fyghte, to the entente to make assaute to the cyte, wherat he sayd he wolde be

him selfe. And whan Arthur herde all that noyse without in the dukes hoost, & saw euery man in harneys, he knewe ryght well therby, how they entended to assale the cyte. Than he called to hī Hector, Gouvernar, & syr Othes, & sayd: Frendes, let vs arme vs and al our compani, and let vs go for to encounter the duke, who is comynge to assaile this cyte. A! my lord Arthur, sayd syr Othes, for Goddes sake be well aduysed what ye do, for they be a great multytud of people, and a great part of oure men be sore wounded, and as yet not through hole: therfore, syr, by myne aduyse we shall not yssue out, but let vs defende this cyte within. A! syr, sayd Arthur, yf God be pleased, we wyll haue none suche reproche: therfore let vs yssue out, and go into this greate woode joynynge to the dyches of oure towne, tyll oure enemyes be come to the walles; than let vs assemble and fyght wyth theym. And whan we shall se oure tyme, we may, yf nede be, w'draw vs agayne into this cyte in the spite of them all. Syr, sayd Hector, ye say ryght well; soo let it be done.

Than there was souned a greate horne, & by the noyse therof euery man in the cyte ranne to theyr hernayes suche as was able, and soo they all yssued out, and all they passed not the nombre of two hondred. And whan they were yssued out, they wente betwene the foreste and the dyches, so that they were not espyed of none of the dukes hoost. And anone Arthur apperceyued where they came foure hondred haubertes well arayed for the warre, and .xxiiii. crosbowes, & also he sawe a meruaylous grete baner wauerynge wyth the wynde, and dyde shewe it to syr Othes. And whan he sawe it he knewe it ryght well, and sayde: Now, gentyl knyghtes, be mery, for this baner is pertaynyng to syr Grace, broder to my lady the countesse, who is come out of the londe of Neorlande, for to sucour my lady. Well, good frende, sayd Arthur, ryde on afore & knowe the trouthe, whether it be he or not. And than syr Othes rode forthe a greate pace, and approched nere vnto syr Grace, and made a token of peas. And whan they sawe eche other, they put of theyr helmes, and made to eche other grete feest and joye. Than syr Grace demaunded, how it wente with the warre of his syster and of the duke, and who as than had the better? As

God helpe me, sayd syr Othes, as yet we haue the better and the ouer hande, thanked be God; and that is by the reason and ayde of thre knyghtes, that God, I trowe, hath sente vnto vs: for aboue al other knyghtes they are full ströge and myghty; and yonder knyght that ye may se sytting on Assyle, whyche was the dukes good horse, is the chefe soueraigne knyght of all the worlde, for hys chyualry surmounteth all other: for thys is he that one day dyd dyscomfyte the duke, and also he hath taken syr Clarembault prysoner, and dyscomfyted all hys route, and also hath wonne the dukes horse Assyle, as ye may se, for he is mounted on hys backe; and that other knyght that is by hym is hys cosyn, and he slewe on a day Peter the Cornu, the dukes broder. Also this knight that sytteth on Assyle the good horse, hathe promysed to my lady your syster and to her doughter, the head of the duke, bycause he slewe by false treason my lorde her husbonde. God y^t all thyng formed, sayde syr Grace, gyue hym power to accomlishe his promesse: let vs ryde to them.

So than they rode forth, and all his route. And whan Arthur sawe them, he dydde of his helme, and spured forth Assyle his horse, and came to syr Grace, and eche of other made grete ioye & feast. Than syr Grace thanked Arthur ryght hertely of the payne y^t he hath takē in his systers warres. Syr, sayde Arthur, I truste this day we shall perfourme all the matter, for I knowe wel the duke is gone to assaile the cyte; therefore, me thynketh it were good that he were nobly withstonde; therefore, after my mynde, let vs departe our company in twayne; therefore, syr, yf it please you, ye shall haue in your company my cosin Hector, Gouvernar, and syr Othes, and ye shall goo along vpon these dyches, & so encounter our enemyes face to face, & I and my company shal come in behynde theyr tentes, soo that whan ye be in hande with them, I wyll be at theyr backs, wherby ye shall se them so abashed, that therby they shal lese the best halfe of theyr hardines. Syr, ye haue ryght well deuysed the mater, sayd syr Grace; and so they departed eche fro other; & syr Grace, Hector, Gouvernar, & syr Othes, rode forth togider so couertly, y^t the duke nor none of his, knewe nothing therof. And so the duke, whā he came nigh to the cyte, he apparayled

him selfe and all his men to begin the assaute, & therewith syr Grace & his company fel on them fyersly. Than Hector spurred his hors, & encoūtrede the standard-bearer, who was a great offycer of the dukes, and strake hym soo rudely, that he perced hys herte, and soo he fell downe dead to the earth before the duke; than Hector set his hande to his swerde, and gaue the duke suche a stroke, that he was fayne for to stoupe downe vnto y^e necke of his horse. Than the dukes men fell on Hector on all sydes, but he defended hym lyke a noble man. Than Gouvernar, for hys parte, bette downe knightes on all sydes. And whan syr Grace saw hym doo so well he praysed him greatly in his herte: than he and all hys company freshly ranne vpon the dukes hooste: howe be it, the dukes company were fer aboue his, wherfore he endured mucche payne. And whan Hector sawe that, he was ryght sorowfull, and spurred hys horse, and habandoned hymselfe amonge his enemyes; and Gouvernar in lyke wyse, who gaue such strokes, that he cōfounded all that euer he attayned vnto, tyl at the last his horse fayled vnderneath hym, and fell to the grounde, and than his enemyes fell vpon hym on all sydes; but he fought so fyersly that none durst approche to hym, for he confounded all that euer he attayned vnto, and syr Grace folowed hym as nere as euer he coude; but, for all that, Gouvernar was so ouermatched, that he was taken prysoner, and .x. other knightes pertaynyng to the company of syr Grace, and so they were ledde towarde the dukes tent; and at that tyme Arthur was among the tentes cuttyng of ropes, betyng downe of paulyons, and at the laste he espyed Gouvernar, where as he was ledde forth lyke a prysoner; wherwyth Arthur was ryght sore dyspleased, & rushte in amonge them; and the fyrst that he encountred wyth, he departed lyfe and body asonder, and he smote the heed from an other; and soo than, by the helpe of syr Grace, they brought to deth al those that ledde forth syr Gouvernar, and soo remounted hym agayne vpon another horse. Than Arthur strake soo in the prese, that he draue asonder sheldes, and frushed to death all that euer he touched, soo that all fledde before hym, for there was none whiche durst abyde hym, without that he wolde receyue his deth: and that syr Grace sawe ryght well, and sayd:

A! good Lorde! what knyght is this? I thynke there is not his pere in all the worlde! Than syr Othes, and Gouvernar, and theyr company, layde on wyth so grete and so heuy strokes, that they myght well be harde a grete space, and the dukes people were sore afrayed whan they perceyued how they were assayled on al partes, bothe before and behynde; and Hector by fortune encountered the duke, and strake hym soo sore, that he strake away a grete pece of hys harneys, and caused hym to recule nye to his horse crope: and whan the duke felte that stroke, he strake agayne Hector so fyersly, that he claue his shelde, and perced thugh his harneys; but, as his fortune was, it dyde not entre into the fleshe; and so there was a greate batayle betwene them, but the greate prese of bothe parties dyd departe theym; and as Arthur went serching the gret and thycke preses, he founde where syr Grace was on fote defendyng hym selfe right valyauntlye: and Gouvernar was there doynge hys payne to rescowe hym, but the prese was so grete that they endured moche payne; but Arthur strake yn the thickest amonge them so fyersli, that he ouerthrewe knyghtes by hepes, & dyde suche noblenesse in armes, that it was wonder to consyder: and so he remounted agayne syr Grace yn the spyte of all his enemyes. Than the dukes company began to wexe feble, and whan the duke perceyued y^t, he was ryght sorowful, and so it fortunied hym to encoūter with syr Hector, who had betē downe in his syght two of his knyghtes, and therwith he strake Hector so fyersly, that nie wyth the same stroke he was sore astonyed, but Hector strake hym agayne so vertuously on the helme, y^t he strake in to it .iiii. fyngers depe, and ryght sore woūded him on the head, where with he was brought in to a traunce, & his horse bare hym all aboute he wyst not where. And at last he came before the sight of Arthur; and as sone as he sawe him, he wyst wel it was the duke, and strake hym so rudely betwene the necke and the heade, that his head fell on his horse necke, and Gouvernar toke and receyued it. Than Arthur sayd: Gouvernar, I wyll ye go bere this dukes head to the countesse, and to her doughter Alyce, & shewe them how I do sende it to them, in accomplyshyng of my promes made to them. Syr, sayde Gouvernar, with a ryght good wyll; &

so departed fro the hoost, & entered into the cyte. And anone the tydynges ranne all about the cyte, how that Gouvernar had brought the dukes head to the countesse fro Arthur; & so al the people ranne to se the dukes head, and range all the belles in the cyte, for ioye of y^e vycctory that God had sente them. And whan Gouvernar hadde made his present to the cou^ttesse, she receyued it with great ioye, and sayd to Gouvernar: Syr, I thanke hartely this knight for his present, and you for your labour, & for this message I gyue you Dorge, my castell, for euer. Madame, quod Gouvernar, and God wyl, I shall not take house nor londe of no creature, withoute the consente of my lorde Arthur. And whan syr Clarembaulte sawe the heade of the duke hys mayster, he made ryghte greate sorowe, and soo entered into hys chambre, and there he demened ryghte greate doloure. Than Gouvernar retourned agayne to Arthur, and thanked hym mucche from the countesse and frome her doughter. And by that tyme Arthur had done so mucche, that all the dukes company were cleane dyscomfyted, as suche people that had no souerayne: wherfore they fledde on all sydes, and Hector and Gouvernar dyd chase them, and so brought many of them to theyr death.

CAP. XXXVIII.

HOW ARTHUR AND HIS COMPANY WENTE TO THE CYTE OF ORGOULE FOR TO TAKE IT BY FORCE, BUT THE BOURGEYSES THEREOF BROUGHTE VNTO HYM THE KEYS, AND DIDDE VNTO HYM HOMAGE, AND SO DYDDE ALL THE NOBLES OF THAT COUNTRYE, AS VNTO THEYR CHEFE SOUERAYNE LORDE.

AND whan the battayle was ended, Arthur came vnto syr Grace, & sayd: Syr, let vs goo to the tentes of the duke, and cause all that we finde there to be brought into the cytie, & therewith we may paye all oure people, for I am sure we shall fynde there ryght

grete rychesse. In the name of God, sayd sir Grace, so let vs do. And so than euerye thyng that was found there was brought into the cyte. And than they all entered in to the towne with all their pray. Than all the dwellers in the cite ranne to Arthur, and sayd with one voyce: Welcome be ye the best knyghte of al the worlde, who hath delyuered vs from our enemyes: therfore God that all thyng hath fourmed, encrease in you bothe honour and valure.

Than the gates of the cyte wer sette open, euery man to go & come who wold. And whan Arthur was come in to the palays, the countesse encountred and enbraced hym, and kyssed hym, and sayd: Sir, ye haue delyuered thys cyte & erledome fro their enemyes, and haue ryght well reuenged the deth of my lorde; therfore, blessed be y^e houre that euer ye were borne. Than she made gret chere to syr Grace, her broder. And the fayre mayden Alyce made muche of her lord, Hector. Than Arthur demaūded for syr Clarembault. Syr, sayde the coūtesse, he is in his chambre, where as he maketh the gretest sorowe of all the worlde for the deth of the duke his lord. As God helpe me, sayd Arthur, he dothe therein lyke a noble wyse man. I loue hym therfore the better. Than he toke sir Grace by the hande, and sayde: Syr, let vs goo se and comforte him. So they went and found him weping and makinge greate sorow. Than Arthur sayde to hī: A! gentyl knight, wherfore do ye thus sle your selfe for y^e duke, who was but a fals tratoure and a shamefull murtherer? Therfore, gentyll frende, appese your minde I requyre you; for, as God helpe me, ye shal haue an other lorde good and true, who shall loue you and set you in grete honoure. Than he called to hym Hector, and sayd: Good cosyn, kepe cōpany here wyth syr Clarembault and cōfort hym, and here after thynke on hym, whan yt shall lye in your power so to doo. Than Arthur and all the other wente and vnarmed them, and than they all wente in to the halle, and there Arthur behelde syr Grace, whome he lyked ryghte well, for he was a meruaylous fayre knyght. Than Hector came thyder and brought with hym syr Clarembault. And whan Arthur sawe hym he cleped and kyssed hym, and made to hym ryght grete chere.

Than Arthur toke the countesse aparte, and syr Clarembault,

and syr Othes, & syr Grace, Hector, and Gouvernar, & sayd to syr Grace: Ye be broder here to my lady, & vncle to the fayre Alyce her doughter; therefore, I wyll ye knowe certaynly, that by the free wyll of my lady the couësse here present, and also by the assent of her doughter, and of all her barons, this fayre lady Alyce ys freely gyuen to my cosyn Hector; how be yt, I wyll that ye knowe that he ys a gentell man, and sone and ayre vnto a ryght myghty and puyssaūt lorde, the Erle of Bloys; therefore I shewe you this, to knowe your mynde, wheder ye wyll agre to this maryage or not. In the name of God, sayd syr Grace, yf there were no more in hi but all onely his noble chyualry, he is worthy to haue a moche better than she is, & therefore I accorde therto with my herte. Well, syr, saide Arthur, syth that ye bee agreed, the mater is y^e better. Syr, it is so, now thys duke hath hys reward for his trespass, & ye haue here moche people, and also my lady hath grete plente of men of warre now here yn this cyte, and in the countre aboute, and sowdyours wyll come to vs dayly yf we nede; therefore by myn aduyce we shall go in to the dukes countre, for I wyll conquere all that londe, for I haue promysed it to Hector, my cosyn; &, syr, yf we nede of ony socour or ayde, I promyse you I shall cause to come to vs a king and .iii. grete erles with al theyr myghtes, so that it wyll be harde to nombre them. Than syr Grace sayd: Noble Arthur! beholde me here: I wyll be the fyrst, and all that I can make is and shall be at your cōmaundement, and I shall folowe you with all my herte. And all that I can make, sayd the countesse, shall bee redy to attende on my ryght dere sone in lawe, noble Hector, your cosyn, & he shall haue all my power to folowe your commaundement. Madame, sayd Arthur, I thanke you.

Than they lefte theyr counseyle and wente to mete, where as they were rychely serued. And after mete Arthur dyde vysyte all them that were hurte. Than Arthur, and the countesse, and all other barons and knyghtes, wente in to the halle, and there Arthur departed all suche tresour that was wonne at the batayle agenst the duke, & gaue to euery body so largely, y^t euery man was ryght well content. Than the couësse sent out her cōmaunde-

ment to all her subiectes suche as myght bere harneys, eyther on horsbacke or on fote, to come to her in all the haste possyble; and syr Grace dyde in lyke wyse on his parte; and so thyder came sowdyours on euery syde, and there they all assembled togyder the Mondaye before mawdelayne tide vnder the cyte of Brewle. And by that tyme suche as were hurte were recouered to helthe, & al thyng necessary was redy to remeue. And a moneth after that the duke was slayne, Arthur and Hector toke leaue of the countesse and of Alice her doughter, and cōmaūded that all the hoost should take the next way to the cyte of Orgoule. And than Arthur mustred hys people, and found how there were two .M. horsmēn and .viii. hondred on fote; so they rode forth toward y^e countre of Orgoule.

But whan the gentillmen of that countree vnderstode howe that Arthur came on them with baners displayed, & sawe well howe they had no captayne, sythe the duke and his bretherne and cosyns were all slayne at the syege of Brewle, and they knewe well howe Arthur had done al this: thā they assembled them togyder in the cyte of Orgoule, and there toke counseyle what they might best do. At the last they concludid and said, how that they were very and hurte, and lost all that euer they had in the last bataill of Brewle, bothe theyr goodes, their faders, their sonnes, theyr newewes, theyr frendes, and all theyr lygnage, and therfore they sayd they hadde loste ynough, wherfore they were of purpose to jeopardde no ferder, and fynally concluded not to defende theyr countre fro Arthur, but vtterly to yelde all vnto hī; for they sayd, they knewe well, though they wold, they were not of that power to resyst agenst his noble chiualry. And of this accorde was al the bourgeyses of the cyte; and so by comyn accorde they sente certayne messengers vnto Arthur, desiringe hym, if it were his wyl, that he shold doo noo hurte to theyr countre, for they were in mynde to yelde all to hym, and to receyue him as theyr chefe lord. And whan Arthur herde that, he was right joyfull, and commaunded incontinent throughtout al his hoost, y^t no man, vpon payne of death, be so hardy to hurte any creature of that countre. And so longe they rode, tyll at the laste they arryued

at the cyte of Orgoule. And all the gentyll men of that cyte, burgeyses, & other, whā they perceyued that he was nere to the cyte, they all yssued out vnarmed, and receyued hym with great joye, and yelded to hym the keys of the cyte, & gaue hym full possession of all the countrie. Than all the hoost lodged withoute. Arthur, and a certayne wyth hym, entred into the cyte, and so remainyd there thre dayes.

CAP. XXXIX.

HOWE ARTHUR MADE HIS COSYN HECTOR DUKE OF ORGOULE, BY
THE ASSENTE OF ALL THE LORDES OF THAT COUNTRE.

THAN Arthur called before him al the lordes and barons of that realme, and sayde: Syrs, ye haue rendred here to me this cyte and all the hole coūtre, therfore it is right and necessite that ye haue a lorde and gouernour ouer you: therefore I wyll gyue you one, I ensure you, ryght puyssaunt bothe of hauoyre & of frendes, who is Hector here, my dere cosyn; therefore make hym duke of all this countrie, and I wyll ye do hym homage; and, syr Clarembault, I wyll that ye begyn fyrste, and here I release you of your prysonyng. Verely, syr, sayde he, I am ryghte well content so to do, syth my lorde is dead, and hauynge none eyres to whome his londe shoulde succede; and so he rose and didde homage to Hector, and after hym so dyd all other, and toke hym for theyr duke & souerayne lorde. Than Arthur sent to Brewle for the countesse and Alyce her doughter, to the entent that Hector and she shoulde be maryed togeder within the cyte of Orgoule: & whan she was come, the maryage was made bytwene them with great triumphe and ioye, the whiche endured .xv. dayes; and at the ende of the .xv. dayes all the hooste departed euery man in to his owne coun- tre. And than Arthur called to hym Hector, syr Grace, syr Cla-

rembault, sir Othes, and Gouvernar, and sayd : Syr Grace, beholde here duke Hector, my cosyn, who hath wedded your nece : therefore oughte ye to loue him fro hens forth. And ye, syr Othes, she is your cosyn, therefore I besech you loue Hector, & bere to him faithfull trouthe ; & if so be his people happen to rebell agaynst hym, socour & helpe him, for now fro hens forward ye are boude therto. And cosyn Hector, if ony warre fall vnto you, sende for me into the countre of Soroloys, wheder I am purposed to goo, and I shall incontynente come to you. And syr Clarembaulte, I put my cosyn Hector into youre handes, therefore I desyre you kepe to hym youre fayth and trouthe, as ye haue promised, and he shal loue you & put his chefe truste alwayes in your wysdome. Syr, I shall, sayd syr Clarembaulte, bere to hym faythful alyaunce and loue, as to my souerayne lord : and so he dydde euer after, for he was a true knyght. Than Arthur sayd to Hector : Cosyn, dele wysely amonge your lordes and subiectes, and than shall ye doo ryght wel : and now to God I commend you. And whā Hector herde that, he sayde : Syr, God not dyspleased, there is neyther londe nor wyfe shal holde me, but I wil go wyth you. Ye shall not do so, sayde Arthur, therefore kepe well your londe, and acquaynt you with your barons ; & whā I retourne agayne I wyll come by you.

And so Arthur toke leue of the countesse, and of Alyce her doughter, Duchesse of Orgoule, and of al other knyghtes, who offred to goo with hym, but in no wyse he wolde none, and so toke wyth hym but all onely Gouvernar, Jaket, and Bawdwyn. And Duke Hector, & syr Grace, & many other, conuayed hym .ii. dayes on hys journey : than Arthur toke leue of them, and they retourned ryght sorowfull for his departynge, & went to Orgoule, wherof Hector was than duke, & erle of Breule by his wyfe ; & he demened him selfe so nobly, that he gate the loue of all his lordes, & kepte his londe in grete peas and tranquylte ; & greate loue there was bytwene hym and the fayre lady Alyce hys wyfe. Now let vs leue to speke of Hector til another season, & let vs speake of Arthur.

CAP. XL.

HOWE THAT ARTHUR & GOUERNAR DEPARTED ASONDER, AND OF
THE TERRYBLE ADVENTURES THAT ECHE OF THEYM FOUNDE
OR THEY METTE AGAYNE.

WHAN Arthur was thus departed fro Hector hys cosyn, who was as than Duke of Orgoule, he and his company rode so longe tyll they had passed many strange coutries right wilde and sauage, & amonge other they past the londe of Constantinoble, & of Armice, and at last entred in amonge the greate mountaynes, the whiche were bytwene the empyre of Ynde the More and the realme of Soroloys; there they aryued in to a moche sauage & wylde place, where as there were many grete wylde beastes of dyuers kyndes; & at the laste they yssued out of that forest and entred into a fayre grene medowe, where as they saw standynge a great toure, & thyder they wente, and founde a yong squyer who was lord of that place, who receyued theym that nyght, and made them ryght good chere; & after souper they stode in a wyndowe; than the squyer demaunded of Arthur wheder he was goynge. I wyll go euer forward, sayd Arthur, tyll I se my time to retourne agayne. Syr, sayde the squier, I demaunded it of you for none yll: syr, beholde yonder before you wher as ther lyeth a forked waye; the pathe that lieth on the ryght hande is mortall, for ther is none that entreth into that waye but shortely he receyued death, & y^t I knowe well, for as yet there was neuer none y^t euer wente that waye y^t returned agayne: &, syr, as for the other waye that lyeth on the lyfte hande is good ynoughe, and withoute jeopardye, for that is the redy passage in to the coultre of Ynde the More. Than Arthur demaunded of hym what was the cause that the other way was so mortall and jeopardous. Syr, sayde the squyer, I can not tell you the trouth, but as it is sayd it is the waye to a castel, the whiche is so stronge and aduenturous, that none scapeth there w^out deth: how be it, it is sayd that a knight shall at the last

acheue it, & fordoo all the aduentures of that place, the whiche are ryght grete and meruaylous, but it is thought that knyght is not yet borne: syr, I wote not what I should say, but I know wel that all suche as hathe gone thyder neuer came agayne, wherfore I know wel that they be all dead; and this sayde stronge castell is named the Porte Noyre. Well, good frende, sayde Arthur, is there none other passage to this castell but by this jeopardous waye? Yes, syr, sayd y^e squier, for this grete way that ye se on the lyfte hande, the whiche goeth to Ynde the More; and whan ye come thyder, than there is another waye, the whiche wyll brynge you streyght to the castel of Blaunche Floure, and from thens ye shall haue a redy passage to the cyte of Argence, & than whan ye be there, euerye man can shewe you the next way to the castell of the Porte Noyre; but, syr, which way someuer a man goeth thyder, he neuer cometh agayne. Well, sayde Arthur, all must be as God wyll haue it.

And therwyth he called Gouvernar, and sayd: Frende, it is conueniēt now that we departe asōder, for ye shal go the waye thugh Ynde the More, and so repayre the nexte waye that ye can to the Porte Noyre: & I wyll go by the way that lyeth on the right hand all onely, sauynge I wil haue with me Bawdewin, and ye shall haue with you Jaket. Than Gouvernar said: Syr, and God wil, ye shall not go to your dethward, but & ye dye I wyll in lyke wyse suffre death wth you. A! syr, sayd the squyer, for Gods sake go ye not that way, nor thinke it not, for it is a great foly: for I ensure you ye shal dye or ye cā obtaine to passe thugh that passage, for there is, as it is sayde, a fell gryffon gretely to be redouted, that kepeth chace of an egle of golde. And whā Arthur herde spekyng of the egle of golde and of the gryffon, he remembred his vysion that he had or he went out of his owne coutrye, wherfore there was none that coude tourne his purpose; yet Gouvernar dyd as moche as he coude for to chaunge his mynde: but fynally he sayd: Frende Gouvernar, if ye loue me speke no more of the matter, for as I haue deuysed, so shall it be wythout fayle. And whā Gouvernar herd that, he was in his minde righte sore displeased, and sayde: Syr, I haue nourysshed

and serued you sythe the begynnyng of youre tender youthe, and wyll ye than deseuer me nowe from your company? Also I haue for your sake lost myn owne countre, & all my frendes. Syr, in good trouthe ye dele wyth me ryght hardly: and if ye do as ye saye, howe shall I retourne againe to my lord, your fader, yf ye dye in this aduētūre? Certaynly nay, for I wyll neuer retourne home agayne for all y^e golde of the world, but I shal slea my selfe yf I may know any other wyse of you than good. Well, sayde Arthur, speke no more therof, for I wyll y^t it shall be thus. And whā Gouvernar perceyued y^t his mind was so feruentlye fyxed, he durste moue him no more of the mater, for fere of his dyspleasure; and so as for y^t nyght they went to theyr restes, and in the mornynge erly lepte on theyr horses, & so departed: & y^e squyer brought them parte of theyr waye, & then bequethed them to God, & so retourned againe: and than at thys sayde forked waye, Arthur and Bawdewyn departed fro Gouvernar and Jaket, and toke the way on the ryght hande: and Gouvernar and Jaket rode forth the waye on the lyfte hande. Nowe, as for a season, let vs leue Arthur ridynge forth on his good horse Assyle, and Bawdewyn with him, and let vs a whyle speke of Gouvernar & Jaket.

CAP. XLI.

HOW GOUERNAR, AFTER THAT HE WAS DEPARTED FRO ARTHUR, FOUND IN A GREATE FOREST TWO KNYGHTES ARMED, WHO HAD BETEN AND WOUNDED AN OTHER KNYGHT, AND WOLDE HAUE RAUYSHED HIS SYSTER: AND HOWE HE RESCOWED HER, AND DYDDE VANQUYSSHE ALL HER ENEMYES.

GOUERNAR, after he was departed fro Arthur, rode .ii. dayes without fynding of ony aduenture, & on the thirde daye he entred into a grete forest. By the time that he had ryden two leges, he founde a knyght lyeng on the earth, & one of his handes stryken

of, & sore wōūded in the backe, & gronynghe ryght pyteously. And whan Gouvernar sawe hym, he demaunded what he ayled, and who had so hurte hym. A! syr, sayd he, thus hath arayed me two armed knightes who are bretherne, and it is now but a yere paste syth they slewe my fader and my broder by false treson, by-cause of a syster of myn y^t they wolde haue had by force; and as now I was conueyeng her fro her vncles place, where as she hath bene euer sythe the deth of her father, & I had thought now to haue brought her to my place: but, syr, these .ii. knightes vnhappely had knowlege thereof, and so lay in wayte for me and for her; and so thus, as ye se, they haue arayed me, for they were armed, and I was without harneys; and also they haue lede awaye my syster to thentente to defoule her vyrgynite, whereof I am more sorofull than of myne owne hurte: therfore, gentyll knyghte, I requyre you, yf ye may kepe her from vilany, do it for Goddes sake. Whiche waye are they gon, sayd Gouvernar, and how ferre by lykely hode are they past? Syr, sayd the knyght, they are ryden yonder way, & are not as yet past the mountenaunce of a lege. Jaket, good frende, sayd Gouvernar, stop the woundes of thys knyght, and tary here styl with him tyl I come agayne to you; and so rode forth as fast as he coude, tyl at the laste he espyed them in a fayre valey, & herde well the damoyzell, how she cryed for helpe and made grete lamentacyon, for one of the knightes helde her to the entente to haue had his pleasure of her. And whan Gouvernar herde her crye so, he sayd: A! false knyghte, I charge the, touche her not, for I wyll defend her in the stede of her brother. Than one of these knightes lepte on his horse, & wythoute speking of ony word ran fyersly at Gouvernar & brake his spere; but Gouvernar hyt hym so egerly, y^t he dasht his spere in to his body more than a fote, & so he fell downe dead: & whā the other knyght y^t helde the damoyzell saw his broder slayne, & perceyued wel that Gouvernar was cominge toward him wyth his swerde drawen in his hand, he had than so grete fere, y^t he kneled down to the erth and cryed him mercy. Certaynly, said Gouvernar, thou gettest no mercy; but as this damoyzell wil commaūde, so shal it be. Thā, syr, sayd the damoyzell, he shal lose his hed,

for he slewe my fader : & as they thus talked togider, there came to them the woūded knight, & Jaket with him. Than this knight sayd vnto Gouvernar : A ! gentyll knyght, I requyre you giue me this fals knight, traytour, & murtherer, who hath slayne my fader & my broder, & hath maymed me. Take him to you, sayde Gouvernar, for it pleseth me ryght well. Than the wounded knyght sayd to his seruauētes, who as than were come to hym fro his own hous : I charge you take thys traytour, & lede hym to my toure, & there I shal do rightful iudgemente on hym. Than Gouvernar toke leue of them, & comaunded them to God. And the woūded knyght wold fayne haue had him to haue taryed all that night with him in his hous, but in no wyse he coud make hym to abyde, but so they departed eche from other, and the wounded knyght wente to his own place, and there dydde right full iudgemente on his prysoner accordyng to his deseruyng.

CAP. XLII.

HOW THAT GOUERNAR CAME TO A STRONG CASTELL CALLED THE BROSE, & VANQUYSHED THE KNYGHT THAT KEPT IT. AND HOWE THAT AFTERWARDE HE WAS KEPTE IN THAT CASTEL AGENST HIS WYL, IN GRETE DAUNGER OF DETH, TYLL AT THE LAST ARTHUR DELYUERED HIM, AS YE SHALL HERE HEREFTER.

THUS whan Gouvernar was departed from the wounded knyght & fro the damoyzell, he rode forthe the same daye so longe, tyll it was full none : than he yssued out of the wylde forest, & founde a fayre meddowe, and sawe before hym a merueylous fayre castell, rounde aboute y^e whiche he well perceyued how that there were pyght freshe tentes and goodly paulyons, and also he sawe many bright helmes shynyng agaynste the sonne ; also he well behelde

how y^t there was pyght in the myddes of the felde a grete perron, wheron there was hanginge a riche and a goodly shelde. Than Gouvernar rested hymselfe a good space to regarde al these forsayde thynges. And whā the knyghtes that were within the tentes and paulyons sawe hym so standyng in a muse, a .xii. of them well armed, mouēd on theyr horses, and wente to hym where as he stode, & right goodly dyd salute hym, and sayde: Sir, it behoueth you to rendre your truage, the whiche is due & accostomed to be had in this place. Why, syrs, sayde Gouvernar, & what is that? Syr, said they, ther is no knight that passeth by this place, but or that he departe he must strike at this fayre shelde, and also must just agaynst him that is owner therof; and, syr, the maner is suche of this place, that yf the knight within ouercome him withoute, than he that is so ouercomen shall lese his horse and his harneys, and shall be led on fote to the iuge lymyted for this case, who shal cause to be openlye proclamed and to be sayde: Behold the knyghte that is vaynquished! & yf the knyght, straunger, ouercome him that is within, than it shal be done by hym as we haue deuysed to you here before: & than the knyghte, straūger, that so hath ouercome hym, shal be lorde of this castell, and of the fayre lady that is within it, and than all we shall be his seruauntes, to loue and to kepe hym as our chefe lorde. In the name of God, sayd Gouvernar, this sayde justyce I wyl not refuse; but as for the signorye of this castel, and the abidyng therin, I relese frely, yf God sende me the vycory. Than all those that were in the paulyons mounted on theyr horses all armed, who were wel to the nombre of two hundred, and al thei came aboute Gouvernar, and said: Sir, ye must juste at this shelde. Than Gouvernar spurred his horse, & gaue the shelde suche a stroke, that it myght well be herde a grete dystaunce of; and therwith the knyght within the castel yssued out al armed: and whā Gouvernar sawe hym come they ranne eche at other, and the knyght gaue Gouvernar a grete stroke and brake his spere; but Gouvernar strake hym soo rudely, that he bare hym to the erth ouer his horse tayle, and brused sore with the fall his lyfte arme, so that he coude not remounte agayne on his horse without helpe: & whan all the other

knyghtes sawe that, they toke and vnarmed hym, and ledde hym forth on fote to a cyte there by, and there he was rendred to the justyce, and incontynent it was proclaymed thurghout al the stretes in the towne: Behold here the knight that is vanquysshed! And so than they toke Gouvernar and brought him with grete ioye into the castell: and than there encountred hym a fayre damoyzell, who was lady of the castell, who sayd: Syr, ye be welcome to this place, and I requyre you be nothinge dysmayed: for, syr, here shall you be serued, and be byloued as chefe lorde of all this place: and, syr, one thyng I ensure you, ye shall be in as good surety of your body, as euer I shall be of myn owne body; but, syr, ye must abyde styll wyth me here the space of two yeres, wythoute soo be that an other knyghte ouercome you, as ye haue done hym whiche was lorde here laste. A! fayre lady, sayd Gouvernar, yf God wyl, I shall not abyde here the space of fyue dayes. Well, syr, sayde the lady, it wyll be none otherwyse, therfore be content therwyth. Well, madame, saide Gouvernar, my trust is better. But for al that, it was not accordyng to his wyll, for as soone as he was entred into the castell, the brydges were drawn vp and kepte with .xl. knyghtes, to thentent that he sholde not escape; but alwayes he was serued rychely with many goodly squyers, who dyd nothing elles but pleasauntely serued hym alwayes; but for all that they coude doo, in noo wyse they coude please hym, syth he myght not goo seke for hys lorde Arthur: how be it, he wolde not, for shame, suffre any other knyght to vaynquysh hym; yet many knyghtes came thyder, but euer he ouercame theym all. Thus Gouvernar abode there a long space, tyll at the last Arthur delyuered hym. Now let vs leue to speke of Gouvernar, & retourne agayne to Arthur.

CAP. XLIII.

HOW THAT ARTHUR CONQUERED THE CASTELL OF THE PORTE NOYRE BY HIS PROWES, AND SLEWE ALL THEM THAT KEPTE IT: AND HOW AFTER THAT HE ENTRED INTO THE HALLES OF THE PALAYS, WHERE HE WAS ASSAYLED OF TWO GRETE AND HORRYBLE LYONS, AND OF A GRETE GYAUNT, & HOW HE OUER-CAME THEM ALL WYTH GRETE PAYNE, AND ACHEUED ALL THE MERUAYLLOUS ADVENTURES OF THE CASTEL, THE WHICH ARE RIGHT WONDEROUS TO REHERSE.

WHAN that Arthur was departed fro Gouvernar, he toke the waye on the ryghte hande, and so rode forth .iii. dayes, without findinge of any aduenture, or any maner of hous or place: how be it, by the counseyle of his hoost, he toke with hym sustenaunce for hym selfe and for his horse, for the space of thre or foure dayes; and thus he passed by many valeys and mountaynes, so that he and his horse were right wery; & on y^e fourth daye he founde an hydeous ryuer, depe & perfound; the bankes were so hye fro the water, y^t he coude not se it ren, y^e whiche water rored and brayed, & ran so swyftely, that none myghte passe w^oute drowning; and in certayne places it was full of grete and myghty rockes, the whiche were of suche heyght, that fro the valey bynethe, the toppe of them myght vnnethes be sene: the whiche rockes were soo full of vermyn, that all the ryuer thereby stanke abhominably. At the last, Arthur found a lytle way alonge by the ryuers syde on the lyfte hande, in the whyche he rode so long tyl it was hye none, & than he espyed a lytel streyght waye bytwene two mountaynes, the whiche were of a meruaylous heyght; than he founde a lytell narowe brydge ouer this ryuer, the whiche w^t moche payne he passed ouer; than he entred in to a streyght causy made of stone, wherein he rode forth, and on euery hãde of hym all was but grete maresses and foule stynkyng waters, the whiche waye brought hym streyght vnto the Porte Noyre, the whiche was the strongest castell of all the worlde; and

so whan he came to the brydge & gate therof, there he founde .xii. knyghtes all armed on horsbacke, .vi. at the one ende of the brydge, and .vi. at the other ende; and at the gate there were .xii. other knyghtes on fote, holdyng hatches and mases of stele in theyr handes, to the entent to kepe that none sholde entre in to the castell; & aboue, on the barbycans & bowlerwerkes, there stode men of warre with crosbowes and other wepens to defend the place. And al this season, in the Moūt Peryllous, was mayster Steuen, clerke to the fayre Florence, doughter vnto the myghty kynge of Soroloys, Emendus; who had lien there nye the space of a yere, to abyde the comynge of that knyght, that sholde acheue al the aduentures of that castel; and in his company was the cōstable y^e kepte the palayses & halles w^out the castell of the Porte Noyre: & than mayster Steuen knewe by his bokes & connyng of astrology, that y^e knyght sholde come the same daye; therfore he & his company mounted on the walles of the palays, to se how the knyghte sholde do, that was as thā come to y^e gate of the castel of the Porte Noyre.

And whan the fyrst .vi. knyghtes sawe Arthur, they toke theyr sheldes & speres. Than Arthur sayd to Bawdewyn: Frende, I haue nede now to take good hede, therfore tari you here without, & let me alone with them. Than these .vi. knyghtes ran all at ones on Arthur on the brydge, and strake him with speres & swerdes; but for all that he felte no hurte: but he encountred soo with the firste, that his spere dyd glyde thurgh his body, & so he fell downe dead, and the spere breake, and with the tronchon thereof he strake the seconde so curteisly, that he ouerthrewe both horse and man, & fell besyde the brydge into the water; and whan he had thought to haue releued him selfe agayne out of the water, than Bawdwyn cast him downe agayne into the riuer, & so there he was drowned: thā Bawdewyn toke his spere and brought to Arthur, wherwith he strake an other knyght so rudely, that the heade of the spere perced his herte, and so fell downe dead; & whan the .iii. other knyghtes saw y^e theyr .iii. felowes were slayne, they fledde backe agayne ouer the brydge, and went to theyr felawes at the bridge fote: & Arthur

folowed them, his swerde in his hāde, & strake one of them, that he claue hym to the sholdres; than al the remenaūt ran at ones at him, but he defended hym selfe valyauntly, as he that noo thyng fered, for suche was his maner, the more he hadde to do, the greater grewe his strength and courage; & so he put hym selfe betwene them and the gate, because of them that were on the walles, for they dyd hym muche trouble and assayled hym on all sydes: & euer ryght noblye he defended hym selfe, and gaue such strokes, that he made to flye into the felde, heades, armes, and handes; & who so euer he felled to the erth, neuer rose agayne, for Bawdwyn toke them by the legges, & dyd caste them ouer the brydge downe into the ryuer, wherin they were drowned: than Arthur begane to chafe and waxe angry, and layde on soo faste rounde about hym, that finally he slewe them all, saue two, who fledde in at the gate, and thought so for to haue escaped: but Arthur hasted hym soo faste after theym, that he stroke of one of theyr heades, and as the other stouped to haue entred in at the gate, Arthur strake hym so fyerslye on the backe, that he claue hym nye asonder; than they that were on the bowlewerkes & on the walles, dyd caste at hym many grete stones and other wepens, but they coude do hym none hurte, bycause that he was so nere to the gate. Than whā the other .xii. knightes, whiche were on fote within the gate, sawe the dyscomfytur of theyr .xii. felowes that were on horsbacke, done al onely by one man, they were ryght sorowful, and so ran out all at ones at hym with grete hatches in theyr handes: & whan Arthur sawe them, he fered gretly Assyle his good horse, therefore he alyghted & delyuered hym to Bawdewyn, & badde hym go tye hym wythout the brige fote; than Arthur encoūtrede so with the fyrst, that he made his head to flye in to the fyeld, and the seconde he gaue suche a stroke, that he claue his head nye to the tethe. And whan mayster Steuē, who was on the walles of the palays, sawe the noble prowes of Arthur & the great strokes that he gaue, sayd to his company: Verely, behold yonder is the noblest knyght of the worlde; it is he that shall acheue the aduentures of this place; it is the same knyghte that we haue taryed here for so longe; & euer Arthur

fyersly fought amonge this people, and bette them downe one after an other: and among them there was one so grete & byg as thoughe he had bene a gyaunt, who ran at Arthur, & or he was ware toke hym by the legges, and pulled hym so fyersly, that they fell downe both togyder to the erth; but Arthur fel vnderneath the grete churle; and than one of y^e other knightes, whā he sawe Arthur lye on the erth, he lyfte vp his axe & thoughte to haue striken Arthur on the hed: but in their hurteling togider the stroke lyght on the grete deuyll, soo that hys hugged and foule heed flewe to the earth. Than Arthur lepte on his fete, and sayde: Syr, I thanke thee, for thou haste delyuered me from muche payne and jeopardye; and syth thou hast delyuered me of thys gret foule deuyll, I shal paye the anone thy wages; and therwith lyfte vppe hys swerde and gaue him suche a stroke, that he claue his head asonder; than Arthur abandoned hym selfe amonge the remenaunt so fyersly, that he made great plente of hedes and armes to fal to the grouūd; and, to make shorte processe, he dydde soo moche, that none of the .xii. were lefte on liue, but al were slayne, and christened in the water by Bawdewyn, for he was to theym a good god fader. Than Arthur stepte in at the wycket of the gate: than al those that were on the walles did shote and caste at him, & euer he bare of wyth his shelde as well as he myght, tyl at the laste he came to them, and the fyrste that he mette wyth loste his lyfe, & there dyde such meruayles, that it was wounder to thynke thereof: for some he threwe ouer the walles, and some lept into the water, so that fynally they were slayne & drowned, & none lefte on lyue in all the castell that he coude find or here: & Bawdewyn was right sore trauayled wyth castynge of them in to the water that were slayne. Than Arthur sayde to Bawdewyn: Frende, I wyll go entre into the grete palays of Aduentures, the which he sawe before hym in the castel; therefore, Bawdewyn, I wyll y^e ye abyde me here in this court, & kepe well my horse Assyle tyll I come agayne to you. Syr, said Bawdewyn, for Goddes sake put not youre selfe noo more in any place where as ye thynke is any greate peryll. Well, said Arthur, care not for y^t, but I praye you do as I say, & loke in no wyse ye come to me wythout I cal.

you : thā Arthur moūted vp certane greces to entre into the hall of the palays, y^e which was y^e way to y^e Mount Peryllous : and there he found the moost fayre hous that euer was sene, sette all aboute with ymages of fyne golde, & the wyndowes were all of fyne ambre, wyth many hye clere wyndowes ; and out of this hall he entred in to a chambre the moste rychest that euer was seen ; for syth God first made mankynde, there was no maner of hystorie nor bataile, but in that chambre it was portrayed with golde and asure, & other fresshe coloures, so quykely adurned, that it was wonder to behold : there was portrayed how God dyde create the sonne and the mone, & in the rofe were all the vii. planettes wrought with fyne golde and syluer, and all the sytuacyons of the heuens, wherin were pyght many carbuncles & other precyous stones, the whiche dyde cast grete clerenes bothe by daye and by nyght. To saye the trouthe, it was the moost rychest chambre and the wonderfullest, that euer was seen in all the worlde ; Proserpyne, quene of the fayry, caused it thus to be made. Also there were dyuerse beddes wonderfull ryche, but specyally one, the whiche stode in the myddes of the chambre, surmounted in beaute all other : for y^e vtterbrasses therof were of grene jasper, wyth grete barres of golde set full of precyous stones, and the crāpons were of fyne syluer enbordered wyth golde, the postes of yuery, with pomelles of corall, and the staues closed in bokeram couered wyth crymesyn satyn, & shetes of sylke with a ryche couerynge of ermyns, and other clothes of cloth of golde, and foure square pyllowes wrought amonge the sarasyns : the curtaynes were of grene sendall vyroned wyth golde & asure, and rounde aboute this bedde there laye on the flour carpettes of sylke poynted & enbrowdred with ymages of golde : & at the foure corners of this bedde there were foure condytes meruaylously wrought by subtyll entayle, out of the whiche there yssued so swet an odour & so delectable, y^t al other swetenesse of the world were as no thyng to the regarde therof ; & at the head of thys bedde there stode an ymage of golde, and had in hys lyfte hande a bowe of yuery, and in his right hande an arowe of fyne syluer : in the myddes of his brest there were lettres that sayd thus :

Whan thys ymage shoteth, than all this palais shall tourne like a whele, & than who so euer lyeth in this bedde shall dye, without it be that knyghte to whome this bedde is destenyed vnto.

And whan Arthur saw the noblenesse of thys chambre, and specyally of this bedde, he had great plesure to behold it, and sayd to him selfe, how that at all aduentures he wold lye downe on the bedde, and not to ferre for anye drede of death; & as he was lyeng downe on this bedde, he espyed in euerye corner of the chambre a gret ymage of fine golde standynge, eche of theym holdynge in theyr handes a great horne of syluer, &, by theyr countenance, redy to blow. Than Arthur herde a great voyce, whyche was so loude and horryble, that master Steuē, who was in the playes w^out the castell, myght ryght wel here it: the which voyce sayd: Behold now the ende! Than mayster Steuen sayd to hys company: I am sure y^e knyght is entred into y^e palays wⁱn the castel; God defend hym from all yll encōbraunce! Than al the palays begā to tremble & shake wondersly; so moche, that at the last one of the iiii. ymages begā to blow his horne so loud, that it might wel be herde the space of a myle; than the palays trembled so sore, y^t all shold haue fallen to peces: the dores & windowes oftē tymes dyd open & close agayne by theyre owne accord: than Arthur hearde aboute him gret noyse of people, as though there had bene a thousande men togyder, but he coulde se no creature: at the last he perceyued greate lyghte of torches, & euer he herde styll the noyse of people comynge and goynge aboute y^e bedde, & also herde the brayenge of an hydeous ryuer, so y^t it semed to hym that it had ben the roringe of the wylde see; ther with he felte suche a terryble wynde, that he had moche payne to sustayne hym on his fete. Than Arthur assayed agayne to haue layne downe on the bedde: than the voyce began to crye agayne, & sayd: Beholde now the ende! Than the seconde ymage began to blowe; than came there in to the chambre suche noyse & tourment, that Arthur was nye defe wyth y^e terryble dynne, & the palays than began sorer to tremble than it dyde before, so that Arthur thought surely y^t all y^e palays sholde haue fallen: than Arthur drewe hym towarde the bedde, & as he wold haue layne hym downe, he sawe





on hys ryght hande a grete lyon, fyers & fell, comynge to hymwarde, gapige and rampynge to deuour hym, & so assayled hym ryght rudely, & wyth hys pawes toke Arthur so by the sholder, that his harneys coulde not kepe him, but y^e his sharpe clawes entred in to his fleshe: and as the lyon wolde haue taken hī by y^e heed, he cast his shelde before hym, & the lyon dasht it wyth his pawes all to peces, and nye had ouerthrowen hym to y^e erth: but than Arthur toke his strength to hym, & as the lyon was rampige before hym, he put his sworde clene through his body, & so the lyon fell downe deed to the erthe; & Arthur was ryght sore hurte in the sholder, and bledde faste. Than he approched agayne to the bedde to haue layde hym downe: than y^e thyrde ymage fyersly dyd blowe his horne, & out of the ende therof, by semyng to Arthur, there yssued out an other lyon, greter & stronger than the other was. Whan Arthur sawe hym, he cryed to God & to our blessed Lady, to helpe & socour hym from yll deth and foule encombraūce: & so the lyon dressed hym towarde Arthur, & strake at hym wyth hys brode pawes, & Arthur helde before hym the remenaūt that was left of his shelde, but the lyon shortly brake it all to peces, as though it had bene but glasse; & with one of his fete he toke Arthur by y^e lyfte syde, and rased fro him a gret parte of his harneys, & his doublet and shert, and a gret pece of his flessch to the bare rybbes; & if God had not there helped hī, he had rendred his mortall lyfe: than Arthur wyth his swerde strake of the lions fote that was vnder his syde, & therwith the lyon fell to the erth, &, or he rose agayne, Arthur recouered another stroke, and strake of his heade by the shuldres: than Arthur toke a fayre cloth of sendall that laye on the bedde, & therwyth wrapped his wōundes & staunched them frome bledynge. Than he approched agayne to the bedde to lye downe to rest hym: and than sodenly the fourth ymage began terrybly to blowe his horne: therwith Arthur loked behind hī, & espyed a great giaunt comyng to hī warde, who was .xv. fote of length, betynge togeder his tethe as though they had bene hamers strikinge on a stythy, who had in his hand a great axe, wherof the blade was wel thre fote longe; the whiche was so longe & sharpe, that it would cutte clene asonder

euery thyng that it touched. And whan thys gyaunt sawe these lyons dede, he was so sore dyspleased, that he was all in a rage, and so rowled vp his eyen, and dashte togyder his tethe, and ran fyerselye at Arthur, thynkyng to haue stryken of hys head: but Arthur feared moche the stroke and lepte asyde, whereby y^e stroke wente besyde hym, and dasht in to the pauement so rudely, y^t the blade of the weapen entred therin juste to the heade: & than Arthur strake him with his swerde, but the stroke mounted vp agayne, and wold in no wyse enter, for he was harneysed with the skynne of a serpent, the whiche was so hard, that no wepen coud empyre it. And whan Arthur saw y^t, he was ryght sore displeased, and lyfte vp his swerde agayne, & strake the giaunt on the heade more rudely than he didde before; but all that aualed not, for it semed to him that he strake on a stethy of stele. Than Arthur fered him selfe gretely: than the gyant strake many strokes at Arthur, but alwayes he watched so the strokes, that he dydde let them passe by hym without ony hurte or damage; for he perceyued ryght well, that if the gyaunte dyd light on him with a full stroke, there was none other way with him but death. Thus this gyant euer pursued Arthur to haue striken him, but alwayes Arthur watched the strokes and voyded them wysely, and oftentymes strake the gyaunt agayne, but he coude doo hym no hurte. Thus they fought a grete space, not ferre fro the ryche bedde in the myddes of the chambre: than the giaunt with grete yre lyfte vp his fauchon to haue stryken Arthur vpon the head, and the stroke came brayeng, & dasht into the erth lyke thonder, for Arthur auoyded craftely the stroke, the which entred and cut asonder a greate brase of a benche, that stode before the bedde, of white yuery: & so the stroke descēded downe into the erth throughtout all the pauement, for the gyaunt was so sore dyspleased, that his weapen entred through bothe wode & stone, and into the erth to the hard head, and therewith the blade of his fauchon brast clene asonder in the myddes: & whan the giaunt sawe that, he fared lyke a fende of hell, and so toke the handlyng therof and cast it at Arthur, but wysely he dyde auoyde it, & so it lyghted on the wall of the chambre, wherin the stroke entred well a fote and an halfe: than

the gyaunte lepte to the brase of the benche that he had cut asonder before, and wold haue tasshed it out of the benche, but it was so sore bounde with crampons of stele to y^e benche, that he coude not remeue it; & as he stouped to pull therat, Arthur espyed hym, & how the serpent's skynne was but shorte behynde his backe, & so vnder the skynne he dasht his swerde in to his bely to the crosse; than the gyaunt fell downe & made a terryble braynge, the whiche myght well be herde a grete waye of: than Arthur recouered on hym an other stroke, & so dasht his swerde in to his herte; than he made a greter crye than he did before, and ther with his soule passed awaie to the deuil of hell. Than y^e noyse was hearde agayne that sayde, Beholde thende! Than was Arthur so wery, & so sore trauayled, and his woūdes bledde so fast, y^e he had much payne to sustaine himselfe on his fete: how be it, as wel as he might he repayred downe to the ryche bed, & alwayes his swerde in his hand, & therwith layd him down on the bed: than the ymage of gold at the beddes head with his bow & arowe dyd shote, & hytte one of the wyndowes so sore, y^e it flewe wide open with the stroke, out of whiche window there yssued suche a smoke & fume so blacke, y^e it made al the hous so darke that Arthur coude se nothing; the which fume stāke so abominably, that Arthur therby was nye dead: than there rose suche a wynde so grete & feruent, that it brast the glasse windowes & latesses, so that the tyles & stones flew all about the hous lyke hayle; and it thōdred so terrybly, that al the erth shoke, and the paleys trembled like to haue gone all to peces; and at the last he perceyued a brēnyng spere al of fyre, the whiche was comynge to hymwarde; therwith he lepte fro the bedde & fledde fro the stroke, and sawe where yt wente in at an other lytell chambre by, & fell on a knyght as he lay a bedde, and so brente hym clene thugh: and the fyre descēded thughout bedde and chambre and al, & sanke depe in to the erth: than sodeynly brast asonder two pyllers whiche susteyned the couerynge ouer the bedde, and than al the hole palays began to tourne aboute lyke a whele: than Arthur ranne to the ymage of golde that stode at the beddes heed, & embraced it in his armes, for the ymage remoued noo thinge: and this tourneng of the palays

endured a grete space. And Bawdewyn, Arthurs squyer, who was wythout in the courte, pyteously wepte & demened ryght grete sorow for y^e fere that he had of his mayster, for he thought verly how that he was but deed, and sayd: A! my lorde Arthur! the best knight, the moost noble and hardy, the moost sage and curteyse creature that euer was fourmed by Nature, alas! why dyde ye entre in to this vnhappy castell, for I thynke surely ye are but deed! And so than at y^e last y^e tournynge of thys palays began to sece, and the derkenes began to auoyde & to waxe fayre and clere, and the ayre peasyble: than Arthur sate hym downe vpon the ryche beddes syde, ryght feble & faynt, bycause of the grete troble that he had endured, and for the ferefull horriblenes y^e he had seen and herde. Than whan it was thus waxed fayre & clere, than the voyce sayd agayne twyse: It ys ended! it ys ended! & whā mayster Steuen herde that voyce, he sayd vnto his compani: Verly the aduentures of the palays in y^e castell of the Porte Noyre are acheued; therefore I am sure it can be none other wyse but that y^e knight that is there, eyther he is dead or elles ryght sore wounded: & than he wēt & gadred herbes, suche as he knewe were ryght precyous for all maner of wōdes, and made of theim to gyue vnto Arthur, if it were his fortune to fynde hym alyue: & Baudewyn, who also had herde the voyce, thoughte verely than that Arthur had ben dead, and sayde to him selfe, that neyther for y^e dyspleasure of his lorde, nor yet for feare of any other thyng, he wolde abyde no longer; but y^e he wold mount vp into the palays to se if he coude knowe howe his lorde dydde; & so wēt vp y^e stayres wth his swearde in his hande, and passed thugh the hall, and entred in to the chambre where as Arthur was sittynge on the beddes side: than was Bawdewyn glad whan he sawe his mayster alyue, and demaunded him howe he didde. And Arthur answered, and said, how that he was ryght wery, and sore wounded. Than Bawdewyn was ryght sorowfull at his herte, for he fered gretly leste that he had some mortall wounde, and sayde: Syr, may it please you to shew me your wōdes? It pleaseth me right well, sayd Arthur. Than Bawdewyn vnarmed hī, and serched all his woundes, for he was a ryght

good surgyen, and wasshed and staunched his woundes, and softly dyd anoynt them, the whiche did him righte grete ease. Than Arthur armed hym agayne, and sayd, that he wolde go serche ferder ouer all the palays, to knowe yf there were any mo aduentures: & therwith there entred in to y^e chambre a yonge varlet, who accustomedly before apparayled the mete and drike that serued for the knyghtes that were dead at the gate of the castel: & whan he came before Arthur, he kneled downe, & sayde: A! gentyll knight, I crye you mercy! for Goddes sake saue my lyfe, for I am a pore verlet, that serued, for my lyuing, the knyghtes that ye haue slayne. Thou shalte haue noo hurte, sayde Arthur, on the condycyon that thou wylte tell me the trouthe, whether there be in this castell any moo men or women? Syr, sayd the verlet, here in this place there be noo moo creatures, but all onelye two prysoners, who were delyuered to my maysters, whome ye haue slayne, to be kepte here in prison, to the entente that it shoulde neuer be knowne where as they were become; & they were sente hyther by the cōmaundement of the Duke of Bygor. Well, good frende, sayd Arthur, brynge me to them.

Than the varlet conuayed him streyght to the prison where as they were closed in, and the varlet didde vnlocke al the dores, whiche were meruaylously wrought; and at the laste they came to a grete cofer all of yren, whiche was surely made fast to the wall wth gret bondes & barres of stele: than Arthur didd so muche by his strength, that he brast open the cofer, & toke out the prysoners with much payne, for they were sore charged with boltes of yren, so that they coude stere no maner of waye. And whā they were loused, one of them sayde: A! dere lorde, I wote not what ye be, nor whether ye haue taken vs out of prison for our welthe or for our hurte: but, for Goddes sake, rather than ye shold put vs agayne into this cofer, fyrst strike of our hedes. Certaynly, sayde Arthur, we haue non entent to do you any maner of hurt; therfore tel me of whens ye be, & where ye were borne? A! syr, sayde they, we are so nye ouercome for lack of mete, and so sore brused withal, y^t we can scant speake any worde: therfore, syr, for Goddes sake gyue vs

some mete! Frēdes, sayd Arthur, I can not tel whether there be ony mete & drinke in this hous or no. Yes, syr, sayd the varlet, here in this hous there is suffycyent, and it were to receyue the myghty Emendus, Kynge of Soroloys. Well, sayd Arthur, than go fetch theym some parte thereof. Than the varlet set vp the tables, & dyd set on them brede and wyne, and other mete sufficient, and than they all dyd eate and drynke as muche as dyd please them: and whan they had done, the varlet demaūded of the prysoners if they wolde be shauen; & they answered: Yes, with a right good wyl. Than the varlet apparayled all thinge redy, for he was a good barbour. And whan they were shauen, than the varlet brought thē gownes of the knyghtes that were slayne; & whā they were apparayled, they semed wel to be extraught of a noble lygnage: and so thee were in dede, as ye shall here after.

CAP. XLIV.

HOW ARTHUR, AFTER Y^t HE HAD ACHEUED Y^c ADUENTURES OF THE PALAYS & DELYUERED THE PRYSONERS, & AFTER HOW Y^t HE ACHEUED THE ADUENTURE Y^t WAS IN THE GALARY GOYNG IN TO THE GARDIN OF THE MOUNT PERILLOUS, & BY HIS MIGHT WITH A GRETE BARRE BET DOWNE II. MASSYUE YMAGES OF COPER, ECHE OF THEM HOLDING A FLAYLE, Y^t WAS OF SUCH WYGHTE Y^t X. MEN MYGHT SCANT LYFTE ONE OF THEM FRO THE EARTH, WHERWITH THEY WERE EUER BETING WYTH GREATE STROKES MADE BY ENCHAUNTMENT, TO THENTENT THAT NONE SHOLDE PASSE IN TO THE GARDYNS OF THE MOUNT PERYLLOUS; & SO THAN FAYLED & ENDED ALL THE ENCHAUNTEMENTES OF THAT PLACE.

AFTER that Arthur had delyuered these prysoners and acheued the foresayd aduentures, than the varlet came to hym, and sayd: Syr, it is of trouth that ye haue fordone & ouercome all the

aduentures of this place sauynge one, & that is in y^e galery goynge in to y^e gardyn; and, syr, yf that were fordone, than euery body myght goo & come in to this castell as surely as in to ony other place. Well, good frende, quod Arthur, I praie you bryng me thyder. Syr, with a ryght good wyll, sayd y^e varlet; but, syr, we must haue fyrst some fyre with vs, for y^e galery is so derke that we can se no thyng there. And so than they lyghted torches, & wente forth so ferre, that at the laste in a lytell strayte way, Arthur foude two ymages of coper, one on the one syde, & an other on y^e other syde, & they had eche of them a grete flayle in theyr handes, wherwith they contynually bete downe ryght, y^e whiche was made by enchaument, so that no creature coude passe by them without deth: and whan Arthur sawe them, he toke his swerde in his hande, & layde on with all his myght on these mahomettes, in such wyse that his strokes might wel be herd of a great waye; but for all that he coude not enpayre them: thā he perceyued wel that hys swerde coude do hym but lytel helpe, wherfore he toke in his hād a gret bar of a dore that he foude there, & therewith he laid on so fast, that finally he bet downe both these mahomettes: than all the enchaūtmēt began to faile, for than he myght se clerely al about him: & wyth straying of him selfe in this bataile, his woundes braste out agayne on bledying; wherfore he was fayne to vnarme hī in the same place, & than Bawdewin dyde staūch al his woūds againe, and dressed them newly with swete and soft oyntementes. Than he wold haue armed hym agayne; but than the varlet sayde: Syr, your harneys shall but hurt your woūdes, hardely leue it here styll, and arme you no more; for surely, syr, ye be nowe in as good sauegarde as though ye wer by your fader that engendred you. Frende, sayd Arthur, loke that here be no treson. Syr, I waraūt you on payne of my heed: syr, boldly now ye may enter into the gardyn, & there ye shall fynde a noble clerke, who is son to a king, who is pertayning to a ryghte hye and mighty pryncesse, the noble Florence, daughter and eyre to the puyssant King Emēdus, who hath bene there more than this halfe yere to abyde for your cominge. For me? sayde Arthur; thou wotest not what thou saist, for how shold he

haue any knowlege of me? Syr, sayd y^e varlet, I can not tell you, but surely it is as I saye, therefore let vs go thyder.

So they wente forth & entred in the gardyn, wherin was all the plesure that could be thought: and as they went forth therin playenge, there came to Arthur a fayre yonge varlet, & goodly dyd salute hym, and sayd: Syr, ye be ryght hertelye welcome into the londe of Soroloys, as the moost desyred knyght that euer was gyrde w^t swerde. Why, good frende, sayde Arthur, where is that place that I am so sore desyred in? Syr, sayd he, in all the lōde of Argence. Fayre frende, sayd he, & why am I so sore there desyred? Syr, y^t cā the prysoners, that ye haue delyuered, shewe you full well. Why, quod Arthur, how know they what I am? Syr, as God helpe me, ye are better knowen here thā ye are ware of: for here is in this gardyn a noble clerke, son to a kyng, who hath taryed here a grete season, who knoweth you wel, and all the demenour that hath ben betwene you & the fayre damoyssel Jehannet, or ye departed out of your owne couētre; & also he knoweth ryght well all that ye dyd at Vyen in the tournay, and also wat ye dyd at Brewle, and how ye made youre cosyn Hector Duke of Orgoule. In the name of God, sayd Arthur, I haue great meruayle howe ye can tel me all this. And as they were thus talkynge, there came to them a grete flocke of knyghtes: than y^e varlet sayd: Syr, yonder is my sayde lorde, who is coming to you. Nay, said Arthur, I shall go vnto him; at whiche tyme, this sayd maister Stēuen was apparayled in a mātell of vyolet chamlet, & in a sircote of grene satyn furred with ermyns; & as soone as he sawe Arthur, he auayled hys bonet & dyd salute hym. Than Arthur sayd: A! gentyll mayster, it is to me a grete rebuke, that so noble a man as ye be, sholde do to me so greate reuerence. Than the mayster dyde smyle, and toke hym by the hande, and sayd: Syr, we haue longe trusted for the welth & honour that is now come to you: therefore, nowe ye be welcome as the chefe souerayne knyght of all the wyde worlde: syr, now I thinke to go se this palays, in to the which neuer man entred before, saue onelye you, for ye are the fyrste that euer entered therto, & that is by your noble valure. Syr, I know wel

ye be sore wōūded, therefore I haue made for you a lytle drynke; and than he sente for it incontynent; & whan it was come, he sayd: Syr, drynke therof hardelye, feare for nothyng, in the name of God, for I desyre more youre health and honor, thā of ony other creature liuyng. Than Arthur toke it and dranke wel thereof; and as soone as it was spredde abrode in his vaynes, he was thereby sodeynly all hole & more lustyer than euer he was before, for than he thought y^t his strength was doubled; & truelye in a maner so it was, for by the vertue of these herbes he had y^e grace, y^t fro thens forth there was neuer man y^t coude drawe out of his body ony blode, but onely the foule monster of the Brosse, w^t whome he fought at great jeopardye, as ye shall here afterwarde.

CAP. XLV.

HOW MAYSTER STEUEN WENT WITH ARTHUR IN THE PALAYS
W^TIN THE CASTELL, TO Y^e ENTENT TO SEE THE WONDERFULL
ADUENTURES THAT ARTHUR HAD THERE ACHEUED.

WHAN that Arthur had receyued the sayde drynke, and recouered thereby his helth, than mayster Steuen toke hym by the hande, and sayde: Syr, I haue grete desyre to go se this palays, I praye you let vs go thyder; & so they ii. went forth togyder before, & all other folowed them who wolde; & at the last they came into the same narowe entre where as Arthur had betē downe these .ii. ymages of coper with theyr greate flayles, & there a grete season they stode & behelde them; and euery man assayed to remeue one of theyr flayles, but it wolde not be, they were so heuye: than euery man had grete meruayle how y^t there might be so muche myghte in one knyght as to beate downe so mighty and heuy a thing; & thā they entred in to the palays, the whyche was the moost fayrest & rychest that

euer was sene with mannes eye ; & at the laste they entred into the ryche chambre wher as the goodly bedde was : than mayster Steuen had grete meruayle of y^e inestymable rychesse of that chambre & bedde. Than came to theym the ii. prysoners, & did salute mayster Steuen ; and whan the mayster sawe them, he knewe one ryght wel, and made to hī good chere, and sayd : What, syr Markes, haue ye bene here prysoner ? Ye, syr, said he, truly, and for y^e neuw of the Duke of Bygor, whā he had slayne my lorde, and murdered my bretherne by false treason, than he tooke me and thys other knyght and did sende vs into thys place as pryuely as he coude, and dyd delyuer vs to the knyghtes that kept thys place, who be now al dead by the prowes of this knyghte, who hath delyuered vs out of pryson & thraldome, &, thanked be God & his noblenesse, now we be escaped fro all daūger. In the name of God, sayde the mayster, it was grete nede y^t he shulde com in to this countre : and than he sayd to Arthur : Syr, it draweth fast to nightwarde, wherfore it is hye tyme to go to souper : &, syr, I wyll soupe w^t you here in this chambre. Syr, I thanke you, sayd Arthur, but I can not tell wheder there be ony thing cōueniente to receyue suche a person as ye be. Syr, sayd the mayster, by the fayth that I owe to you, I am pertayning to so hye, and puyssant, & rych lady, who hath sufficient both for you and for vs all. Than y^e mayster cōmaunded to make redy the souper ; than anon the tables were layd, & the maysters seruaūtes ran to his tent on the Mounte Peryllous, and anone they brought all maner of thyng necessary, vessells, & plate of gold & syluer grete plente : than the clothes were layde & water brought forth : than Arthur refused to wasshe with y^e mayster, because he was son vnto a kynge. Wel, syr, sayde the mayster, I praye you fulfyll my desyre, for truly I know better your estate & honour thā ye wene I do ; than Arthur dyd as he was requyred ; than the mayster sat downe, & Arthur by hym, & the Markes before them ; & all other sate downe at other syde tables, where as they were as richely serued as though they had ben in the hous of the noble Florēs : but thogh she were not there, yet she payed for all theyr expences. Thus Arthur sat at souper,

who seamed, to all theym that se hym, to be ryghte fayre & gracyous aboute all other that euer they sawe, & so they praysed hym moche in theyr hertes; and whā they had souped at good leysure, and the tables taken awaye, than they set them downe on cosshyns of sylke: and y^e mayster sayd to Arthur: Syr, behold here my lorde the Markes, who is & shal be youre knyght, for ye haue delyuered him oute of pryson. That is trouth, sayde the Markes, & therefore I thanke hym. Well, syr, sayd Arthur, I herde you say, as I remembre, how that the neuwe of the Duke of Bigor caused you to be put here in pryson, and also how he slew youre brethern by treason: wherfore, if it may please you, I requyre you shewe me how it dyd fortune? And whā mayster Steuen herd hym enquiry for the mater, he had grete joye, for than he knew wel that Arthur wolde remedy that case. Than the Marques answered, and sayd: Syr, the mater is very longe to reherse, therefore I feare me the reporte therof shall annoy you. Syr, truly, sayd Arthur, it shall be no payne to me to here it. Than the Markes sayde: Syr, it is of trouth how that the lord of Argenton was my broder, who was in his tyme a ryght good knight. I saye it not because he was my broder, but of very trouth he was so gretly alowed, that the renowne of hym was spredde abroad all the londe of Soroloys, for there he was reputed to be the moost souerayne knyght of al y^e worlde; and so it fortunyd, y^t the Duke of Bygor, who is a myghty lorde in his coultre, made on a daye a tournaye to be holden at his cyte of Bygor, bycause of a neuwe of his, who was maryed the same daye vnto a ryght hye lygnage: and thys dukes neuwe was, & yet is, righte fyers and orgyllous, and is a ryght gretly redoubted knyghte of his handes, and in euery place he was reputed, nexte to my broder, to be the best knight of the world: and at this foresayde turnay was my brother, and this dukes neuwe had gret enuy at him, bycause of the great noblesse that he herde reputed of hym, and so toke counsaile with some of his affinite, and determined to just against my lorde mi brother, to thētent to abate his renowne: & so he toke to his company .x. other knightes; & whā the tournay was begon, he and his company ran at ones at my broder, who as than

was not ware of their malicious purpose, nor had no mo in hys company but me and his squier, wherfore we suffred muche payne ; but finally my broder deliuered vs all fro them, & bette downe the dukes neuw to the erth : but than my brother, by his gentylnesse, did that I wold not haue done ; for whan he saw him at the erth, he lighted & brought him an other good horse, and helped him to mounte thereon ; and than my brother lept againe on his horse and went to the tourney, & there dyd suche meruayles of armes, y^t all that behelde him meruayled therat : and generally they all sayd, how that in all the worlde there was none lyke him. And whan the dukes neuwe herde all that prayse be giuen to my brother, his herte swelled for anger and enuy, & for despite he wolde no more iust y^t daye. And whā all was ended, the price was giuen to my broder by the cōsēt of both parties ; and so than all the companie wente to the courte to the duke, & there they began greatly to praise my broder. And whā his neuw herde that, he was right sore dyspleased, bycause he was beten downe by hym the same day : therfore, openly before the duke, for pure malice, he appeled my broder of treason, and sayd, how that he had beten him downe in the tournay by crafte and false tresō. Than my broder coude no lenger endure his wordes, but sayd : In fayth, syr, ye say vntruly, for I neuer thought treson in all my lyfe, neyther to you nor to non other creature ; and therwith in the quarell he dyd caste downe his gloue at the fote of the duke. And whan this dukes neuw saw that he had cast his gloue, he was nie enraged for anger & despite, and stept on his fete, & toke a grete mace of stele from a varlet that stode beside, & therwith he strake my broder on y^e head, so that the blode fell to the erth ; & whan I saw my brother so stroken, I toke my swerde in my hande, & thought to haue slayne hym : but than other knightes kepte vs asonder : so than my brothers company began to draw togyther, & his company in likewyse, wherby it was likely there to haue ben a great fray : but wysely the duke appesed bothe partyes, and was right sore dyspleased with the outrage of his neuw. Thā my brother sayd to the duke : Syr, your neuwe hath appeled me of treason, and therefore beholde here lieth my gloue to defend my

self in the quarel, that by treason w^out any defiaunce, & or I was ware, he hath striken me like a false traytour as he is, and that wyl I proue my body agaynst his; and therfore, syr duke, lette me haue ryght, according to the law of armes. Thā was this dukes neuw greatli blamed of euery knight, who sayd generally, y^t yf he had right, he should be for this dede right sore punisshed. Thā the duke was right sorowful, & did much labour to appese my brother, but in no wise he wolde be content of a great season: how be it, fynalli the duke required hī so moche, & so did all other knightes, that my broder, who had a gentyll herte, did forgyue all y^e matter, & there the peas was made, & eche of them bounde to other in two .M. pounce, to kepe & obserue suche directions as the duke shold take in y^e mater, wherw^t they said they were well content. Than the duke sayd: Syrs, fyrst eche of you shal pardon other of al euyl willes that hath bene betwene you. And therto they answered, & said, y^t they were pleased so to do, & in knowlege therof, they embraced eche other, and kissed togyther. Than the duke determined ferder, how that his neuw shuld delyuer to my brother .CL. poūd of yerely land, to haue to hym and his ayres for euermore; the whiche direction his neuw there conformed: & there my brother was put in full possessyon therof, both by the duke & also by his neuw, who shewed fayrer semblaunt outwarde to my brother thā he thought inwarde in his herte. Than my brother toke leue of the duke: & hys neuw, vnder the false colour of loue, cōuayed my broder parte of the way; but falsly, and like a traytour, he had layde a bushement, in a lytle wode, of thre score men in harneys; & so there, or we were ware, they dasht in behinde vs, & there shamefully slew my brother, and two of his sones of the age of xii. or xiii. yeres. And so there they slew a xl. knightes y^t were in our company, and there he toke me and my felow, prisoners, out of the whiche ye haue delyuered vs. And, syr, it is so, my brother hath no mo childrē left on lyue, sauynge a doughter, who is enheritour to all the lande of Argenton, & the dukes neuw hath taken fro her all thenheritaunce that she is borne vnto, and hath her in kepyng, and is purposed to mary her to a boy who is his barbour, who by reason ought to be married to

a great erle or els a lord, both for her noblenesse, richesse, and frendes: but as now she is in y^t case, that there is none y^t wyl mayntaine her right, for manye of her frendes ben dead, & I haue ben here in prison syth the death of my lorde my broder, her fader; and also her men & subiectes dare do nothing for lacke of a capitayne: & this duke is gretly redoubted, for he is mighty bothe of hauoyre & of frendes; & therfore my nece is lykely to be lost, for she shal be giuen at this next mawdelayne tyde to a lewde boy, & she is likely to be disherited for euer, for she hath no helpe nor coūsayle: & therwyth this Markes pyteously begā to wepe for the great sorow that he had at his herte. Than mayster Steuen sayde: Syr, I ensure you it is of a trouth al y^t this Markes hath shewed you. Certaynly, sayd Arthur, yf God wyl sende me the grace y^t I may here of a knight of min that should come hither to me, thā wyll I faythfully ensure you to do my payne to help & socour this noble damoyssel. Syr, quod mayster Steuē, I wyl know to morow how your knight doth, but now it is to late; and, syr, ye shal ly al night in this palais, which is pertayning to my ladi Florēs, for it was geuen her whā she was but ii. dayes olde: how be it, she was neuer here, nor yet none other, but you all onely; therfore, syr, kepe it for my ladye tyll the season that ye may rēdre it to her noble grace, for ye haue made it quite free fro al manner of enchaūtemētes; and, syr, I wil go this night into my tente, where as I haue layne al this season, & to morowe betymes I wyl come to you agayn, and brynge all my stuffe into this place: but, syr, loke that ye ly all this night in this ryall bed; and there Arthur promised hī so to do. Thā the mayster & his cōpany departed fro hym as for that nyght.

CAP. XLVI.

HOWE PROSERPYNE, QUENE OF THE FAYRYE, ABOUTE MYDNYGHT APPERED TO ARTHUR W^t GRETE LYGHT OF TORCHES, AND HOWE THAT SHE SHEWED HIM THAT WYTHIN THE MOUNTE PERYLLOUS THERE WAS THE WHYTE SHYELD, AND THE GOOD SWERDE, ENCHAUNTED, CALLED CLARENCE; AND HOWE THAT HE SHULD HAUE THEM W^t MOCHE HONOUR YF HIS HERTE DURST SERUE HYM. AND HOWE THE NEXTE DAYE MAYSTER STEUEN LED ARTHUR INTO THE HERBER WHERE AS THE WHITE SHELDE WAS, THE WHICH COUD NEUER BE REMEUED FRO THE TREE WHEREON IT HANGED, AND HOW THAT ARTHUR TOKE IT AT HIS EASE, AND CLARENCE THE SWERD ALSO, THE WHICHE COUDE NEUER, BEFORE THAT TYME, BE DRAWEN OUT OF THE SHETH, NOR IT WOLD HELPE NO BODY BUT ALL ONELY ARTHUR, WHO DREW IT OUT LYGHTLY, AND AFTER THAT IT DID HIM MOCHE HELPE, AS YE SHALL HERE AFTER.

WHAN the mayster Steuen was departed, than Arthur layde hym downe in the ryal ryche bedde, and slepte well all his fyrst slepe tyll it was about mydnyght; than he awoke and saw grete clerenes of torche lyght afore hym, and perceyued, standing before his bedde, a quene crowned w^t gold, who was the most fayre creature y^t euer was sene; and he thought she spake to him, & sayde: Arthur, frend, here is in this place the whyte shelde, & Clarence the goode swerde of the fayry, therfore thou shalt haue moche honour yf thy herte be good. And therwith she vanissed away; wherof Arthur had grete meruayle, both of her beaute, & also of there sodayne departing: thus remayned Arthur tyll it was clere day, than he rose, & mayster Steuen came to hym, and they went and herd masse; & after masse Arthur sayde to the mayster: Syr, I cā not tel what quene it was, y^t this nyght was with me in the chambre where as I laye, but it was the goodlyest fygyure of a woman that euer I sawe: & she sayde to me, how y^t ther was in this place the whyte sheld and the good swerde Clarence. And whan mayster Steuen herd that, he smyled, and sayd: Syr, I see

well it is you to whome the swerde and sheld is destenied vnto : dyuerse knightes hath assayed to take them, but they coude neuer remeue them fro the place where as they be, therfore now I thiike they haue founde theyr mayster. Syr, let vs goe thyder, & see what wyll fortune.

Than they yssued out of y^e palays and went into the gardyn, where as was the ryche paulyon pertayning to the noble Florēce, the which was of the rychest werke of the world, of grene satyn & crimsē, bordred w^t golde & asure, & the post that bare it was of fyne yuery, and the cordes of grene sylke, and in the toppe therof stode an egle of borned golde, and at the two corners there stode two grete gryffons shining agenst the sonne. Than Arthur remembred his vysion that he had or he departed out of his owne countre, & so he behelde the egle a grete ceason, and at the last he came to the paulyon. Than Arthur sawe before hym in the front therof, the personage of a quene crowned with gold, the whiche crowne hadde vi. braunches, the whyche signified vi. realmes, and in eueri braunche there were wrytten letters : and in y^e fyrst was wryten Emendus the myghty Kyng of Soroloys ; & this braunch was chefe and highest of all other ; and in y^e seconde was wryten Florēce, Quene of the realme of Blaūche Toure ; & in the thirde was giuē the Kīg of Orqueny ; and in the fourth was wryten Piuthens, Kyng of Valefounde, father to mayster Steuen : and in the v. King of Normall ; & in the vi. Ismaelite the Geant. This crown was set ful of precius stones, and this image was fayre and gentil to behold, with her forehead playne and whyte, and her heer like the colour of gold, her browes small and propre, somewhat drawynge to the browne colour, and her visage playn, neyther to longe nor to rounde, coloure lyke as roses and lilies togider had ben medled, her nose long and streyght, and her ruddy mouth somewhat smyllynge, her eyen lowly, and al her body and other mēbres made without ony reprehencion by the ordynaunce of Nature, who had set in her all beaute ; and she was vested wyth a samyte of grene, streyte gyrde to her w^t a lace of golde, so that somewhat her lytel rounde and lyly whyte brestes might be sene, the whiche became her wonderslye wel, and ouer al this she had on a sircote

of crymsen lined w^t vyolet sendall, & her wide sleues were of grene enbordred w^t floures of golde and with ryche pearles. And this ymage helde bytwene her handes a chaplet of sylke wrought subtilly full of freshe floures, and aboute the border therof were letters wrought of precyous stones that sayd : He shal kepe me for his owne that shall haue this chaplet. And whan Arthur had red wel at length these letters, and sawe the freshe beaute of this ymage, than his herte opened for grete loue, & with grete and feruent desyre he loued the presentacyon of that ymage, and therwith stode before it in a grete study. Than mayster Steuē sayd : Syr, I ensure you my lady is suche as this ymage representeth. Syr, sayde Arthur, than in her is all the beaute of the world. Ye, syr, sayde the mayster, there be two persones y^t resēbleth this ymage : first, the quene y^t ye saw this last night appere to you, who is called Proserpyne, quene of the fayry, who dyd gyue to my lady Florēs this castell & this pauilion, & destenyed on her, how y^t she sholde neuer be married but to the best knyght of the worlde, & to hym this ymage sholde gyue her chaplet y^t she holdeth in her handes ; &, syr, I trust it be you. Secōdly, also my lady Florēs in all thinges resembleth to this ymage ; and so the Quene Proserpyne, & my lady Florence, & this ymage, are in al poyntes so like, y^t ye can not know the one fro the other ; & the hye braūche y^t is in the crown of this ymage, betokeneth y^c mighti King Emendus, fader to my lady Florens ; and the seconde sygnifieth my ladies realme, and the other iiii. represente iiii. other kīges, who are subiectes to my lady Florēs & to her fader ; therefore, syr, & it please you let vs enter into this paulyon, & se wheder ye may haue the sheld and swerd that all other haue fayled of.

And so they entred into the pauilion ; and in the myddes therof Arthur sawe where there hanged on a perche the shelde and the swerd. Than Arthur wente thereto boldly, and toke it as easely as thoughe it had bene his owne before : than he sette his hande to the swerde, and so drewe it out of the shethe, and the blade therof was so clere, that it dyd cast meruayllously grete clerenese, and therefore it was called Clarēce ; and before that tyme it was neuer drawn out of the shethe

nor sene with mānes eye; and Arthur delte as easely therwith as he dyd w^t his owne. And whan mayster Steuen sawe this, he had grete joye, and sayd: Syr, I se well ye are the same knyght that it was deliuered vnto, therfore nowe I haue grete joye, and I trust that God shall cause you to attayne to muche honour and noblenesse. Than Arthur sayde: Syr, ye promysed to tell me some tidinges of my knyght that sholde come hyther: syr, I requyre you to tell me yf ye know any thinge of him. Sir, said the maister, I know wel how ye promised to come & seke this aduētūre which ye haue acheued, but in no wise ye wold suffre him to come w^t you, & therfore ye sent hym by the great hie way through out Ynde the More, to thentent he sholde not se your deth, nor that he shold dy w^t you; & so, sir, he is not as yet come, for in dede he cannot, for he is in the castel called the Brosse; &, syr, it is by al likelyhode impossyble y^t euer he shall depart thēs w^tout deth, though he were made of yrē & stele, for al the remedy of the worlde cā not kepe him fro deth: therfore, Arthur, comferte your selfe, & of a thing that is lost without recouer, neuer thinke theron more. Truly, syr, sayde Arthur, but yf I haue my knight I shall neuer haue cōferte, therfore speke to me neuer therof; but, syr, I require you howe he is so lost or in such ieoperdy as ye speke of? With a right good wyl, sayd the mayster; but I fere me it wyl anoy you, for it is a lōge processe to reherse. Wel, sayd Arthur, as for y^t I care not; tell on, I requyre you.

CAP. XLVII.

HOW MAISTER STEUEN SHEWED ARTHUR HOW Y^t GOUERNAR, HIS KNIGHT, WAS IN THE CASTELL OF BROSE, & HOW Y^t THE CUSTOME OF THAT CASTELL WAS FIRST BEGON.

THAN the maister sayde: Syr, it is of a trouth y^t the castel of the Brosse is a right strōg & a noble place, & is y^e chefe hed of al y^e coūtre, for there is wel a v.C. gentylmen y^t holde their lōd therby,

& they are all subiectes to hym that is lord of y^t place. Syr, it passeth not two yere ago that there was a lorde of this castel, who was called syr Neuelō le Roux, a ful good and a gentyll knight, who was right sage reputed and gretli ryche, & right sore bedrad, & wel beloued of all people; &, syr, it is of a trouthe that ioyning to this castell, within ii. leges therof, there is a forest, in the which ther is a maruaylous great depe pit, & the entre therof is iiii. square, & it is well iiii. spere length brode, & is so black and stinking, y^t no creature can abide nere it; & into this abhominable pit there doth repayre a meruailous & a right horrible mōster, the foulest figure y^t euer was seē or herde of, for he is wel xxx. fote long, & his head three tymes more larger thā is the heed of an oxe, & his eyen bigger than a mans fyst, and some of his teth standing out of his mouthe more than a fote & an halfe, wherwith he wil breke both yren & stele, & his armes byg and longe without any mesure, his nayles or clowes lenger then a fote, so harde & sharpe, y^t there is nothīg but that he wil perce it, & all his body as blacke as any cole and as hard as stele, for there is no thing y^t can perce or enpayre him: & also he is of that strength, that he is able to cary away at ones iii. knightes armed; and he eteth neuer other mete but raw fleshe of mankinde; & also he is so light and swyft, that an horse cannot ren fro hym, & oftentimes he hath ben assayed w^t great hostes of men, but al thei colde neuer do him any maner of hurte neyther w^t swerde, spere, nor crosbowe, nor any other wepen; & thus he doth greate trouble to al the hole coūtre. And so, syr, it fortunēd y^t a two yere past, aboute St. Laurence tide, y^t this sayd lord, syr Neuelon, was comīg out of Ynde the More fro the emperour, who loued him right wel, & so he had thought to haue gone home to his owne castel of the Brosse, & a twēty of his seruaūtes in his cōpani: & he passed by this forest where as this great pit is; & so, vnware to him, he & his squier dyd rest thē not ferre fro the pit, & suffred his other cōpany to ryde forth on afore; & so it fortunēd that this foule monster was the same morning yssued out of his pit: & so, as soone as he espied this lorde Neuelon, he ran on hym, & so strangled & bare him into his great pyt, and so there he was vtterly lost: & whā this was knowen, there was

made for hī right great sorow : &, syr, this lord hath a doughter who is named Blaūche Floure, who was then of the age of xv. yere ; & whan she herde the tidiges of the deth of the lorde her father, she made ful great sorow : & so she entred into a litle chapell, and there she abode xv. dayes contynually demening wonderful sorow for her father ; and euer she praid to God that she might haue some vengeance of thys foule monster : so longē thus she prayde, that at last on a night she herde a voyce that sayd to her, how y^t the knight y^t ouercometh the lorde of this castel at the ende of two yeres, shal fight against this monster : how be it, the voyce shewed not whether he shold ouercome the monster, or els be ouercomen hīself. Than the yōge damoyssel reported al this that she herde the voyce say, to her brethern and to her vnclē, & so than they ordeyned amonge them, that her vnclē should abide in the castel & just with al knightes y^t passed by y^t way, vnto the tyme y^t he were ouercomen with a strong knight : & so it was ordeyned, that if the knight of the castel ouercome the knight without, than he shold lese his horse & harneys, & also be led to the justice, that it should be cryde throughout al the coūtre : Behold the knight y^t is vaynquished ! & yf the straunge knight wythout ouercome him of the castel, than the knight straūger should go to the castel & there be receyued as chefe lorde therof, & be serued honourabli ; and thā he shold kepe the castel & that vsage, til he were ouercome w^t an other knight. Sir, it fortunēd your knight Gouvernar to passe by this castel, and there did iuste agaynst the lord therof, & so ouercā hym and mani mo sith that time, that he was fayne to kepe the sayd vsage ; & so, syr, he is in this castel, & it passeth not now to come vii. wekes of the ful seasō of two yere sith the vsage begā : and, syr, I thīk verily there shal come no knight thider betwene this & that, by whome he shold be ouercome ; & as sone as the two yere be full cōplet, than shal he be led to fight with this terryble monster, & I am sure as sone as he cometh to hym he is but dead, and it were a L. such as he is ; and, syr, there is mo than CC. knightes cōtynualli lodged aboute this castel, to thentent y^t he shold not stele awai, therfore I repute him but a dead man, for there is no succour cā help him. Wel,

maister, said Arthur, sith it is thus as ye saye, as God helpe me, there is nothing shal holde me, but I wyl go thither and put my body in ieoperdy for his, for it were a greate shame for me thus to leese my knight; therefore, Bawdewyn, frēde, make redy al my gere, for I wyl remeue to morow betymes, for certaynly I wyll abyde no lenger for al the worlde: & whā the maister herd him, he knew wel y^e there was none myght let hym of hys enterpryse: how be it, he sayde: Sir, he ought not to be reputed neither for sage nor wise, that wyl take on hym suche a thyng that he cannot acheue, and to go there as perill is w^out remedi: it is no hardines thus to do, but a ful gret foly: therfore, syr, for Goddes sake abyde. Mayster, quod Arthur, speke no more to me therof, for sureli, sir, I wyl go thyder & loke ones on that foule monster, though he be the deuyl of hell. Wel, syr, sayde the mayster, as God wyll, so be it; but, syr, syth ye be he to whome it is destenyed to acheue all the aduētures of this countre of Sorolois, whereof this aduenture is one of the gretest, the whiche I pray to God that ye maye subdewe it, therfore, syr, take with you this whyte shelde, for there is nothinge that can enpayre it, & this swerde Clarence, for there was neuer yet a better; & thus, syr, syth ye wyll nedes go, I trust ye may go y^e more surelyer, & I pray God to sende you good fortune & spede, & saufe to come agayne: & so for y^e night they went to their restes.

CAP. XLVIII.

HOW THAT ARTHUR, WHAN HE WAS DEPARTED FRO THE PORTE NOYRE FOR TO GO TO DELYUER GOUERNAR OUTE OF THE CASTELL OF THE BROSE, & ALSO FOR TO FYGHT WYTH THE MONSTER, HE FOUNDE IN A FAYRE MEDOWE THE NEUEW OF THE DUKE OF BYGOR ACCOMPANYED WITH XIII. OTHER KNIGHTES, WHO ASSAYLED HYM RIGHT FYERSLY, BUT HE DEFENDED HYM SELFE SO VALIAUNTLY, THAT HE SLEW II. OF THEM, AND WOUNDED SO THE DUKES NEUEW THAT HE WAS FAYNE TO BE CARYED AWAYE IN AN HORSE LYTTER.

IN the morninge betymes, Arthur rose and toke leue of the mayster, who sayde to hym : Syr, for Goddes sake returne agayne as shortly as ye may, for I haue many thiges to speke with you of : &, sir, I & this Markes shal kepe this palais i the meane season : & Arthur promised so to do, & so departed he & Bawdewyn, & rode forth ii. dayes w^{out} fyndig of ony aduēt^{ure}, tyll at last, on a Fryday about none they entred into a fayre forest, & rode a longe seasō & founde no creature : at last they came in to a fayre medow lusty & grene, & Arthur was in a gret thought, remembrynge on his shelde y^t coude not be enpayred, & also of Clarence his swerde, the which wold cut euery thing ; and he had grete desyre to se them proued, to thentent y^t he might know wheder they were of y^t vertue or not ; also he was mouēd on his good horse Assyle ; & as he rode thus thynkyng, he mette sodenly wyth xiiii. knightes all armed, & iiii. of them were on horsbacke, and the other x. were lyghted on fote, & were sitting vnder an oke bycause of the shadowe therof, for y^e weder was than very hote : & whā these iiii. knightes on horsbacke sawe Arthur, one of them dysranged hym selfe, and wythout speakyng of ony worde he ran at Arthur, and strake hym on the shelde a grete stroke, and passed forthe wythoute breakinge of his spere ; and therewith Arthur loked aboute hym, and at the last the knight that had stricken hym was ready apparayled to haue retourned agayne : than Arthur ranne at hym,

and the knyght brake hys speare; but Arthur gaue hym suche a stroke, that he frusshed downe bothe horse and manne all on an hepe, soo rudely, that wyth the fal he brake one of his legs, and his hors fell on hym. Than Arthur sayd to hym: Syr, ye be a traytour thus to stryke me w^out defiaūce: but I thinke ye haue now gret nede of a carpenter to make you some styltes & croches, for I wene ye can not ryse without a lenyng stocke. Than an other of these knightes came on Arthur, and he wente shortly to the erth and his heles vpward: & whan his other two felowes sawe that, they ran bothe at ones on Arthur, and hyt wyth both theyr speres at ones in the myddes of his sheld, but they remeued hym no more than yf they had stryken agenst a grete toure; & so they passed forth by, and than retourned agayne wyth theyr swerdes in theyr hādes, and assayled fyersly Arthur on al sydes. Than Arthur waxed angry, & toke in his hand his good swerde Clarence, & strake therwith so the fyrst, that he claue his head downe to the sholdres: & whan his felaw sawe that, he fledde to his felawes y^t were on fote. And than sir Isēbarte, neuewe to the Duke of Bigor, who was fyerse & fell, and captayne of al y^e cōpany, whan he saw one of hys knightes slayne, who was his cosyn germayn, he snuffed in the nose, and bette togyder his teth, & bended his browes as though he had ben wode, & called for his helme and for his horse, & wold suffer none of his cōpany to go with him, for he sayd he wold alone reuenge the death of his cosyn: therewith he mouēd on his horse, and toke a grete speare & a myghty. Than Arthur espied where a spere stode lening agaynst a tre, and toke it in hys hand, & rode agaynst the knyght that came rennyng at hym, and they mette so rudely, that they al to sheuered theyr speres, & so passed forth without ony hurte at y^t course. And whan syr Isembarte sawe that he had not beten downe his felawe, he wente to Arthur and strake hym on the shelde with his swerde, but the stroke rebounded agayne: and whan the knyght sawe that, he was ryght sorowful & sore displeased: and than agayne, with al his myght, he strake Arthur in y^e myddes of his shelde so rudely, that his swerde brake asonder in the myddes. And whan Arthur sawe that, he sayd: Syr knyght, ye haue made of one

two, for ye haue made a shorte swerde of a longe; now ye shall se how I can werke. Than Arthur strake hī with Clarēce, his good swerde, on his helme so rudely, that the stroke dyde glente downe on his arme, and did cut asonder all his harneys, & entred in to the flesshe, so that the stroke bare away a grete pece of y^e brawne of his arme: the whiche stroke was so heuy, that it descended downe to the crope of the horse, and cut asonder the arson of the sadel, & gaue the horse a grete wounde; & therwith bothe horse and man fell downe to the erth. Than y^e knyghtes seruauntes ran to helpe hym, but he laye a grete whyle in a traunce: & whan he reuyued he sayd to Arthur: Syr knyght, ye haue sore wounded me, & slayne my cosyn germayne; but, syr, I promyse you faythfully, that as soone as I shall be hole agayne, I shal render to you this bounte, for I wyll stryke of your hed bi the sholdres where so euer I mete you, eyther in chyrche or in ony other place, armed or vnarmed. Wel, syr, sayd Arthur, than ye haue giuen me respite tyll ye be hole agayne: & than, by the grace of God, ye wyl not do so much hurt as ye speke of. Than the other knyghtes wolde haue fought with Arthur, but theyr mayster defended them the contrary, bycause he sayd he wolde sle hym with his owne handes.

Than Arthur departed fro them, and y^e knyghtes put theyr lord in a horse lytter, and so caried him to a castel of his own, where as he remayned tyll he had recouered his helth.

And Arthur, after that he was departed fro them, rode so longe, til he yssued out of the forest, & rode vp to a great hye hyll; and at the descēding therof, he saw where a knight al armed cam right rudely to himwarde, and a greate speare in his hande. And when he came to hym, he sayde: Syr, are ye of the company of the xiiii. knyghtes y^t went this way but late? Nay, certaynly, sayde Arthur, for they did their payne to haue trobled me, but I thanke God they myst of theyr purpose. But, syr, I pray you, wherfore do you axe the questiō? As God help me, syr, bicause yf ye were ony of them, I wolde sle you with myne owne handes or euer ye past any fender, if I coulde; & also theyr mayster, for he is the most shamefullest knight y^t lyueth, & falsest traytur that euer was: for

he & his cōpany had nye slayne a brother of mine this mornīg by this riuers side, bycause he wold not giue hym a fawcon that he bare on his fist: therfore he ran at him wyth hys swerde in his hande, and hath wounded him in xv. places of his bodi, as he that was vnarmed, & the traytour & all hys company be in harnes; & therefore I am come after him to slee him, & I myght: how be it, I thinke it could not lie in my power, for he is a knight greatly redoubted: neuertheles, I had rather to be dead than my brother shuld be vnreuenged. Syr, sayd Arthur, take no thought for y^e matter, nor folow hym no ferther thys day, for surely he is in no good poynte as now to fight with you, nor yet with none other, for he is right sore woūded. A! syr, sayd the knight, blessed be God! who kepe & preserue him that hath doone y^e dede. Thā the knight returned agayne with Arthur talking of that matter. At the last Arthur demaūded of him what maner of knightes they were, & of whens? Syr, as God helpe me, it was syr Isembarte, neuew to the Duke of Bygor, the moste falsest traytour in all the world; for he hath mured, by treason, the lord of Argenton, falsly without any cause. Ye, syr, quod Arthur, sith it is he, than his trouble pleaseth me so much the better; & by the grace of God he shal haue more anoyauce within short space. So than they approached to y^e place where as this knightes broder lay sore wounded. Than Arthur called to him Bawdewyn, who was a good surgeon, & cōmaūded that he should do his diligence, as shortly as myght be, to hele that knight; and so Arthur lay there al y^e night. And the knight demaūded of him whether he was ryding? and he answered, and sayd: To the castel of the Brosse. Wel, syr, said y^e knight, and ye will beleue me ye shall not come there, for the goinge thyder is much peryllous. As for all that, I care not, sayd Arthur, for I wil go thider, & just with the knight that is within. Wel, syr, sayde the knight, in the name of God so be it: & syth ye wyll nedes go, I shal bring you thyder; for I am one of the knightes of the same compani that are lodged without, to thentent that the knight that is within the castell shold not stele awaye. Syr, quod Arthur, know you wel the knight that is withī the castell, or what is his name? Veryly, syr, he is a

knight straunger, & his name is syr Gouvernar, a bigge knight and a strōg, and a browne of colour, & there is no knight that justeth with him but he goth to the grounde: & therfore who so euer wyll just w^t him, hath nede to be of great vertu & strength. Wel, sayd Arthur, I wyl assay him: and so they wēt to rest, & in the mornyng arose. And the sayde knight, who was named Josseran the Almayne, & they rode forth the next way to the castell of the Brosse; & Arthur left Bawdewyn behinde hym at the castell to take hede to the wounded knyght. Thus Arthur and Josseran the Almayne rode forth so longe togeder, y^t on a Wednesday aboute none they entred into a fayr medow before the castell of the Brosse. And whan the knightes y^t were without keping the tentes, sawe Josseran, theyr fellow, and Arthur wyth hym, than they wente to theyr harneys, and cam vnto them, & made right great chere to Josseran theyr companion. And they sayd to Arthur: Syr knight, ye must furnishe that is belonging to you to do, and y^t is surely ye must strike this shelde, and than ye must iust with the knyght that ye shall se yssue out of this castell. Well, sayd Arthur, in the name of God, al this shall I do with a right good wyll. And these knightes behelde him well, & perceyued that he was a goodly knight, and prayded hym moche in their hertes.

Therw^t Arthur spurred forth his good horse, and ran at the shelde with his spere, and gaue it suche a stroke, y^t he claue it asonder in the myddes. Than Josseran sayd to his felowes: Certaynly if he gyue suche strokes to his enemies, there may none endure him. Thā Gouvernar in the castell was sone armed, & yssued out. And than the damoyssel was mouēd on the walles to beholde the batayle. And whan Gouvernar sawe Arthur, he knew him not bicause of his white sheld: but Arthur knew hym right well, and behelde the countenaunce of Gouvernar, how he stretched himself in hys sadell, and plunged his shelde, and dressed his spere, and made hym redy; wherfore Arthur loued him much the better: and so they ran eche at other, and mette so rudely, y^t Gouvernar brake hys spere; but Arthur strake hym so fyersly, that Gouvernars horse enfoūded and fel vnder hym, and so horse and man all went to the earth: and than Arthur tourned and layde his hande on his swerde, and

was coming againe to Gouvernar; and al that behelde his valyauntesse praysed hym moche: and Gouvernar did nothing, but was fayne to get hym on his fete.

Than all the knyghtes went to hym, & wolde haue vnarmed hym and led hym to the justice. And whan Arthur sawe that, he coude not suffre that he shoulde haue so muche shame, and sayd: Syrs, it is no right nor reason that ye shold lede him forth to the justice, for hys horse fell vnder hym; and therfore, though he fel, it was the faute of the horse and not of y^e knight, for he hath done right well his deuoyre; and also he is my man, for I am his lorde, wherfore he is bounde not to withstande hys mayster; so than he is not to blame, syth he hath done wel his deuour. And whan Gouvernar herde his lorde speke, he knew him right well by his speche; than he dyd of his helme and ranne to hym: than Arthur lyghted of his horse, and so they clipped, and kissed, and made greate joye eche to other. And whan Jacket saw his olde mayster Arthur, he kneeled downe and dyd hym great reuerence. And whan al the other knyghtes saw y^e great honour that Gouvernar and Jacket made to Arthur, and how that he was theyr lord and maister, they thought thā wel that he was some noble man and of some great lygnage, and therfore they wolde not displease him, but let Gouvernar alone in peas: & so they broughte bothe Arthur & Gouvernar in to the castel to the lady, and the damoyseil receyued them with grete joye. There Arthur remayned in greate joye, tyll it came to iii. dayes space before the season prefxed that he sholde go fyghte wyth the terryble monster. Than all the knyghtes that were without cam to Arthur to speke with him; and whan they were in his presence and seyng hym so fayre & gentyl, wherfore they loued him wyth all theyr hertes, and sayde amonge them selfe: It is grete damage to sende to his deth so gentyll and so noble a personage. And Arthur herde theym well, but he fared as though he had not herde. Soo fynally these knyghtes sayd to hym: Syr, it is so ye haue bene here a season, and ye be the last that hath ouercomen y^e knyght of this castell, and now the terme is come that ye muste goo & fyghte with the monster, who passeth not fro this castell the dystaunce of two leges; & therfore it

behoueth you to remeue this nexte daye betymes, & we shall brynge you vnto another castell pertaynyng to the lady of this place, the whiche is nye to the denne where as the monster holdeth his abydyng; therefore, syr, make you ready, and all your harneyes: for we fere gretely ye shall fynd it a jeopardous aduenture to brynge to a good ende. Well, syr, sayde Arthur, I am content to remeue when so euer ye wyll haue me. And whan they herde hym saye so, they had of him greate pyte, soo that dyuerse of theym pryuely wepte for hys sake. Syrs, sayde Arthur, I am here alone: therefore I praye you kepe companye with me here this night, and let vs make good chere, and to morowe betymes we wyl remeue whan it shal please you. And soo they graunted hym, and taryed there all nyghte, tyll it was tyme in the mornynge to ryse.

CAP. XLIX.

HOW THAT ARTHUR FOUGHTE W^t THE MONSTER, THE MOOST FOULEST & HORRYBLE FYGURE THAT EUER WAS SENE WITH MANNES EYEN, & SO VAYNQYSHED HIM BY HIS VALIAUNT PROWESSE, & STRAK OF HIS HEAD, AND DYD SENDE IT TO THE FAYRE FLORENCE.

IN the mornyng Arthur arose and herde masse, & al the other knyghtes wyth hym; and after masse, the mete was made redi, and whan they hadde eaten at theyr leyser, than the knyghtes wente to theyr tentes and armed theym, and so dyd Arthur & Gouvernar. Than y^e lady brought to Arthur a fayre swerde, the which was her faders; and soo he tooke and gyrte it to aboute hym by his other swerde Clarence, than they called hym the knyghte wyth the two swerdes. So he toke his leue of the ladye, and she cōmaūded hym to God.

And whan he was departed, she sayd all wepyng: A! gentyl knyght, it is grete damage to sende suche a personne as ye

be to your deth! And whan Arthur was out of the castell, than there were in his com̃pany v. hondred to conduyte hym to the other castell; and so longe they rode, that at last they aryued therat; and the same daye the monster had taken a bocher, and deuoured him in the presence of them all without the castell gate: but whan the porter of this castell sawe al these knyghtes comynge, he knewe well they were the knyghtes of the Brosse, that broughte wyth them the knyght that sholde fyghte with the monster; therfore he opened the gates, & than all the people of the castell ranne to beholde Arthur, who was clene couered with his whyte shelde, & holding his hand on the pomel of his swerde, hauynge a ryghte goodlye chere and a hardy semblaūt. Than euery persone that behelde him sayde eche vnto other: Alas! what damage is it to sende suche a persone to his death! A! gentyll knyght, God haue mercy on thy soule, for thy bodi can not longe endure! & this was the comyn voyce: and so they conuayed hym on the degrees in to the hall, & that nyght there they rested theym, and in the mornynge they all arose and herd masse. And Arthur receyued the holy sacrament of the blessed body of our Lorde Jesu Chryst in fourme of brede, & after masse they all assembled them in the hall, and there talked togyder of dyuers maters: & as they were thus comonyng, they herde the monster rore and braye out for lacke of mete, and was yssued out of his den, & made greater noyse than x. bulles had brayed all togyder. Than all they of the towne and castell had greate fere; wherfore they closed them selfe in theyr houses, & shytted faste theyr dores & windowes, for they knewe well, that the monster, rather than he wolde dye for hunger, wolde come to that castell and deuoure them all.

And as soone as Arthur herde hym, he demaunded for his harneys, and Gouvernar dyd brynge it to hym wyth mucche grete payne & fere. And all the other knyghtes were ryghte dolent for his sake, for they doubted gretely of hym lest he sholde be slayne. And whan he was armed, all the people of the castell folowed hym. Than the processions went throughout all the towne and castell, and all prayed to oure Lorde to kepe and defende theyr champion. Than was Arthur mounted on his good horse, and a grete spere

wel headed with stele in his hande, and the whyte shyelde aboute his necke, and Clarence his good swerde about hym, and also the swerde that the lady of the Brosse had gyuen hym; and so he yssued out of the castel. Than they shet faste the gates after hym; and so they all mōūted vp to the batylmentes of the walles to beholde the aduenture of Arthur. And so Arthur rode forth tyll he came to the entre of this pytte, & the monster the same tyme was syttyng on the brynke therof; & whan he espyed Arthur, he rose vp on his fete, and bette so togyder hys tethe, that it was herde a greate waye of, & came to Arthur wyth his armes abrode, to thentente that he wolde haue borne hym to his pytte: but wysely Arthur set his spere before hym, y^e which was grete and bygge, and well headed wyth fyne stele: and the monster, who fered nothing, ranne so rudely agenst the spere poynte, that the spere sheuered all to peces, but it did no maner of hurte to the monster; & so he approched to Arthur, & thought to haue embraced him in his armes: but than Arthur put before him his whyte shelde, & the mōster dasht with his nayles therat, thinkinge to haue perced it thugh, but in nowise he coude enpaire the shelde; for the propertie therof was such, y^t nothing shold enter nor enpayre it. And whan the monster saw y^t he had done no hurte to the shelde, he began to enrage and fare like a fend of hell. And than he toke Arthur bi the helme w^t his longe teth, the whiche were as sharp as stele. And whā Arthur saw his mouth so wyde open, he toke y^e swerde that the lady of the Brosse gaue hym, and dasht it into his mouth. And whan the monster felte the swerde in his mouth, he let go his hold of y^e helme, & toke the swerd bitwene his teth, and al to brake it, as though it had ben but glasse. And whan Arthur saw that, he knew well that yf Clarence his good swerde dyd not help him, his lif was but lost; and so toke the good swerde in his hand. And than the monster toke him by the helme with one of his handes, and by the sheld with the other hande, & al his nayles perced hys helme as lightly as though he had felte nothing, & dasht Arthur so sore with the other hand on the shelde, that nye he had fallen with the stroke; but he coude not perce the shelde. Than Arthur lyfte vp Clarence

his good swerde, and strake the monster therewith on the head so rudely, that the swerde entred therein more thā an handefull. And whan the monster felte him selfe wounded, for anger he bette his teth together, and rouled hys eyen, the which glemed like brondes of fyre, and bette togider his fistes, & made a terrible noyse.

CAP. L.

HOW THAT THE KINGE EMENDUS SENTE A KNIGHT NAMED BRYSEBAR, ACOMPANIED WITH A THOUSAND MEN OF WARRE, TO THENTENT THAT HE AND HIS COMPANY SHOLD GO FIGHT W^t THE MONSTER. AND HOW THE SAYDE KNIGHT ARIUED AT THE MONSTERS PIT THE SAME SEASON WHYLE THAT ARTHUR AND THE MONSTER WERE FIGHTYNG TOGIDER; & THERE HE AND ALL HIS COMPANY DYD SE HOW THAT ARTHUR SLEWE THE MONSTER WYTHOUTE HELPE.

So it was aboute the season that Arthur should thus fyght with the monster, the mighty King Emēdus held open courte in his citie of Sabar, and weth him there was the Emperour of Inde y^e More: for this citie was right nere adioyning to his empyre, and also he was glad to be with King Emendus, bycause of his daughter Florence, whō he wolde gladly haue had to hys wyfe: and theron he trusted whan the yeare were ones expyred. And at thys feast were all the other foure kinges, and the xii. peres of the realme of Sorolois, and many other erles and barons, knightes and squyers, quenes, ladies, and damoyelles. Than there came to the kynge manye greate complayntes for the hurte that the monster of the Brosse had done in all the countrey. Than the kynge tooke counseyle for thys matter: and so he was aduised, and concluded theron, to sende a M. knightes armed, to go fyght with the

monster. Than there was chosen a ryght valyaunte knight to be theyr capitayne, who was called syr Randell Brysebar, who was one of the knightes pertaynyng to Florence : & he toke with him such knightes and men of warre as he wolde chose ; & so toke his leue of the fayre Florence ; & she desyred him that, yf he coude brynge it aboute, he should go to her castel of the Porte Noyre, and cōmaunde her to her clerke, mayster Steuen, and enquire of hym whether he haue herde any tydynges of that mater y^t he went thyder for ? and commaunded him y^t he shold shewe vnto her clerke, that the emperour wolde haue her to his wyfe by force agaynste her wyll. And so syr Brisebar promised to accomplysshe her cōmaūdemēt if it were to him possible. Than he went fro her, and toke his leue of the kinge and of themperour, and of all the hole route ; and so departed, and had well in his cōpany a thousande armed knightes. And they rode forth so longe, till at the laste they aryued nere to the place where as the monster was, the same propre day & houre that Arthur was fighting wyth hym.

Than Brysebar and al his companie did light downe on fote ; & the monster, who as than felte himself hurte on the head with the stroke that Arthur had giuen him, as it hath ben shewed before, wherfore he brayed and rored so longe, that he myght be herde a great space of. And whan Brysebar sawe, a ferre of, a knight alone fyghting with this monster in right great peryll, wherof he had greate pitie, and so had thought to haue set on the monster with all his hole host, for to haue holpen Arthur : how be it, he thought he wolde se somewhat more of the deling of the knight. Than the monster ranne to a tree that stode by the pyt, and toke it so rudely in his handes, y^t he tare it vp rote and rinde, & therw^t strake at Arthur, who for fere of the stroke caste before him his whyte sheeld ; & the stroke did light theron so rudely, that it range al the place ouer ; the which stroke was so heuy, that Arthur was fayne to knele downe on one of his knees, & therwith the tre brake asonder in the mids. Thā the mōster, for anger, was nie out of his minde, & did caste at Arthur the tronchon of the tree so rudely, y^t it brake in the ayre as it wente : but Arthur douted the stroke, and stepte asyde, & let the stroke glent by : and therwith





Our Heath dromet

he was nie to the monster : & therewith the monster lift vp his armes to haue enbraced hym, but therw^t Arthur strake him vnder the owne arme with his swerde Clarence, so that his arme flew clene into y^e felde. Than the monster lept forth, and w^t great yre toke Arthur by the head with his longe teth, & with his other hande he toke him by the sholdre, & tare awaye all his harneys to the bare fleshe ; and thought to haue trussed hī on his backe, and haue borne him to his pyt ; but than Arthur put his swerd Clarence into his bely vp to the harde crosse : and truly it was great nede that Arthur had as thā that good swerde, for there was none other in all the worlde shold haue helpē him. And than whan Arthur had thus put his swerde into his body, he therewith rusht to the monster so vertuousli, that he tombled him to the erth : & wyth his falle he pulled of Arthurs helme fro his head with his longe teth, that were so fastened therin, that the helme coulde not be gotten out of hys mouth : for whā he felte his death, he joyned hys teathe throughout the helme fast together. Thā Arthur stroke at him agayne with hys swerde, wherw^t his foule horrible head flew into the felde ; than Arthur sat him downe, for he was right sore laboured.

Than syr Brysebar and all his company lept on theyr horses, & praised moche Arthur for sleinge of the monster : wherof, they sayd, he was y^e best knight of the worlde : and whan Brysebar came nye to Arthur than he lyghted. And whā Arthur sawe hym comynge, he put hys shelde afore hym, and toke his swerde in his hande, to defende him yf nede requyred, and yet he had as than no helme, for it was styll in the mouth of the monster. But than Brysebar dyde of his helme, & ryght curteysly dyd salute hym, and sayd : Syr, God, that all thinge fourmed, kepe and saue you, sir gentyll knyghte, as the chefe floure of all chyualry ; for ye, alone, haue acheued that enterpryse y^t we thousande knyghtes were sente to do. Ha ! syr, sayd Arthur, sauynge your pleasure, it is no suche dede, as that ye and suche company as ye speke of sholde nede to enterpryse ; nor I haue done noo thyng that ought so gretly to be praysed ; for you, or ony other knyght, myghte as well haue done it better or shortelyer than I haue done : therefore

this dede nede lytle to be spoken of, for it is to small of reputacion to be recounted for ony noblenesse. Well, syr, sayd Brysebar, we know & se ryghte well what it is. Syr, ye haue delyuered fro grete peryll of death the best parte of all this my companye; wherefore I requyre you, that besyde thys bounte that ye haue shewed vs as in sleynge of this monster, that it wolde please you to shewe to me yet another bouite. Syr, sayde Arthur, demaunde of me what it please you, and if I can or may do it, I shall not fayle you. Wel, syr, than ye shall here what ye haue graunted me. Syr, it is of trouthe that I am pertayning to the moost honourable queene that now liueth, & that is the fayr Florence, doughter to the myghty Kynge Emendus, kynge of the noble lande of Soroloys; & as for me, I am the mooste insufficyent knight that he hath of a M. in his hous dayly: howe be it, syr, his noble grace did send me, accompanied with these other thousand knyghtes, to thentent that we sholde do to this monster as ye haue done alone, God be thanked! for ye, by your prowesse, haue achyeued that thyng that all other haue fayled of. Syr, this is the ende of my desyre, that it wolde please you to go with vs to the courte of the noble Kynge Emendus; and so ye shall be our companyon, and knyght to the noble Florence: and, syr, I ensure you I shall be youre true and faythfull companyon, for I shall neuer haue any maner of thyng, but your parte shal be therin. And whan Arthur herde his request, he smyled a lytle, & sayde: Syr, I hartely thāke you; but as now it wyl not be; for it behoueth me to go to the Port Noyre to mayster Steuen, for I haue promysed hym so to do; therefore, syr, I pray you be not myscōtent, though I can not at this tyme accomplysh your wyll.

And whan Brisebar herde him speke of the Porte Noyre, he sayd: Syr, haue ye ben at the castell of the Porte Noyre? Ye, truly, sayd Arthur. And, syr, I requyre you, how dyd ye enter into the castel? Syr, I dyd there so moche, that, thanked be God, there I entred. And, syr, were ye on hye in the palays, or dyde ye lye in the ryche bed? Ye, truly, syr, said Arthur, there I was, & laye in y^e rych bed, and taryed there ii. dayes & ii. nyghtes. Well, syr, sayde Brysebar,

I se well that ye haue acheued al the aduētūres of that place, wherfore ye be the chēfe souerayne knyght of al the world: syr, I wyl ryde w^t you to the Port Noyre, yf it please you, for it behoueth me to speke w^t mayster Steuen, my ladyes clerke, for I haue to hī a message fro her noble grace; &, syr, I wyl sende home all this people w^t a neuew of myn, who shal ber with him this mōsters heed with your helme in his mouth, and he shall present it fro you to my lady Florence. A! syr, sayd Arthur, y^t lady is ryght excellent and noble, as I haue herd say, & I am to symple a person to sende onye thing to her grace, nor also I neuer saw her, nor she knoweth not who I am, & also thys present is of to smal a reputaciō, therfore me thinketh it were foly to me to send it to her grace: therfore, syr, I requyre you let it alone. Certaynly, quod Brysebar, y^t wyl I not do: for the present is suche, y^t I am sure it shal be receyued wyth gladder chere than though ye had won a grete cyte. Well, syr, sayd Arthur, do as it shall please you best: how be it, I had rather y^t ye wolde let it alone. Than Brisebar called to him his neuewe, and sayde: Fayre neuew, ye shal retourne vnto the courte, and humbly cōmaund me to the kinges grace: and also ye shall bere with you this monsters head, and present it to my lady Florence fro a knyghte of hers, whome she neuer sawe, nor he her: the whiche knyghte, ye maye shewe vnto her grace, hath aquyted the Porte Noyre, and acheued all alone the aduentures of that place; & also shew her how y^t I am gone with the sayd knight to y^c Porte Noyre, to speke w^t her clerke, mayster Steuen, for the mater y^t she cōmaunded me at my departyng. Syr, sayd his neuewe, all this shall be done; & so toke the head, & cōmaūded them all to God, and so departed; and all the other knyghtes eche of them wente home to theyr owne houses. Than all the people of the castell set opē the gates, and yssued oute, and came before Arthur, both Gouvernar, & Jossaran the Almayne, and all other; and Jossaran made greate chere to Brysebar: and so al the people of the cōūtre came thyder to se the monster, & Arthur theyr champion, & sayde: Syr knyghte, blessyd be the tyme that euer ye were borne, and the moder that bare you, for ye haue delyuered all this cōūtre fro deth. Than al

the processions of the cōtre came thyder, & receyued Arthur with grete tryumphe, & brought him in to the churche within the castell; & ther Brysebar, Josseran, Gouvernar, & Jaket, dydde vnarme hī. Than the lady Blaūche Floure came thyder fro her castell of the Brosse, & descēded downe fro her chayre, & so mouēted vp the stayres into the palays, & there she found Arthur vnarmed, & Brysebar with him, who dyd beholde Arthur meruayllously, for they were all abashed of the grete beaute & grace that they sawe in hym. And whan they sawe this lady coming, they al arose and met her: and Arthur, Brisebar, and she, sat downe al togider, and so talked of diuers thynges, tyll theyr mete was redy; & than they wente therto, & were rychely serued: & the nexte daye the lady went agayne to her castell of the Brosse: & in this castel Arthur soiorned thre dayes, & than departed, & Brisebar with him, & toke leue of al the knightes of that countre; & so they came to the castel of the Brosse, where as the lady Blaūche Flour receyued them wyth greate honour, & she made right grete chere to Gouvernar, bycause he was w^t her all the season y^t Arthur fought w^t the monster; & so Arthur soiourned in this castel iiii. days; and than he, & Brysebar with him, departed: & this lady Blaūche Floure conueyed them a grete space, & than she toke her leue, and retourned agayne to her castel of the Brosse; & than Arthur, Brysebar, Gouvernar, & Josseran, rode forth tyl they ariued at the castel where Josserans broder laye wōūded, & Bawdewyn had hī in heling: and as sone as Bawdewyn knew that his lorde was come, he was neuer so joyfull before, and ranne and encountred Arthur, and enbraced him for ioye; and y^t night they were there well serued.

Now let vs leue to speke of Arthur for a season, & let vs speke of syr Isembarte, neuue to the Duke of Bygor, who was borne to the castel of the Roche, sore wōūded by Arthur, as ye haue herde here before.

CAP. LI.

HOW SYR ISEMBARTES COSYN ENBUSSHED HIM IN A GREAT FOREST WITH A GREATE MULTYTUDE OF MEN OF WARRE, TO THE TENT TO SLE ARTHUR BY TREASON: & THERE ARTHUR DYD WYTH HIS HANDES SÜCHE DEDES, Y^t IN A MANER IT WAS INCREDIBLE. AND HOW THAT GOUERNAR AND BRYSEBAR WERE TAKEN PRISONERS, & LED FORTH TO A TOURE: & THERE ARTHUR SLEW OF HIS ENEMYES V. HONDRED, & MOUNTED INTO THE TOURE, AND SO RESCOWED THE PRYSONERS IN THE SPITE OF AL THE TOWN, AND THERE WANNE THE PALAYS.

It is of a trouth how that Arthur sore wounded syr Isembarte, the Duke of Bygors neuw, vnder the castell of the Roche, & thider his seruauntes brought him, & there he lay a greate season at leche crafte; & so the tidinges ran all ouer the countrey, how that the Duke of Bygors neuw lay sore wounded, and how that this was done by a straüge knight: & at last these wordes came to the herig of a knight of greate power, who was called sir Firmont, tresourer to the Duke of Bygor, and he had one of his sholdres hier than the other: & this syr Fyrmont was a right good knight and greatlye redoubted, and he was cosyn germayn to syr Isembarte, & broder to the knight y^t was slayne by Arthur: and whan he herde the deth of his broder, & how that his cosyn was sore wounded, & lieng at the castell of the Roche, he was therwith sore dyspleased, & lept on horsbacke acōpanied w^t x. other knightes, & so wente to the castel of y^e Roche to se his cosī, who as thā coude not stere out of his bed: ther they did salute eche other. Than syr Firmont demaüded him how he did? And he answered, & said, y^t he was right sore hurt. Well, cosyn, I pray you who hath doone this dede to you, & also slayne my broder? Syr, I cannot tell you, for it was a knight straunger, who is gone towarde the castel of the Brosse, as it hath ben shewed me; & also it is sayd y^t he purposeth to retourne againe w^t Josserā the Almaine y^e

same wai y^t he came; therfore I am right sore dyspleased that I am not as yet hole; for, if I were, certaynly I wolde mete w^t him agayne. Wel, syr, said Fyrmont, take ye no thought; for yf he come that way agayne, he shall be right wel encountred; for syth he had done me one displeasure, I shall quite hī agayne w^t two. A! good cosyn, quod syr Isembarte, for Goddes sake abyde tyll I be hole, for verylye he is a knight of great valure: it is I as yet that bereth the hurte, therfore I pray you let me be at the quital therof; for I fere me leest he wyll do you more damage than he hath done to me. Ye saye well, quod syr Firmont, I wil do as you say; & that he sayd to apese his cosyn: but incōtinēt after, as sone as he might, priuely sente a varlet to espie which way that Arthur retourned fro the castel of the Brosse. And thus Arthur & Brysebar was w^t Josseran in his broders castel; & there they determined, y^t they wolde not remeue thens tyl the Wednesdai next after. Thā the varlet returned again to syr Fyrmont, & shewed him where as Arthur was, & how y^t he wolde depart thens the Wednesdaye next after, & sayde: Syr, now yf ye wyll, ye may be reuenged of the iniury that hath ben done to your broder, & also to your cosin: for the knight that hath done it, on Wednesday nexte betime, wil pas by the same place where as your cosyn was hurte, and your broder slayne. And whan syr Fyrmont herde that, he hadde great joye. Than he sent messengers to al the men of warre that belonged to the towne & castell of the Roche, & al the countrey aboute, commaundinge them al to be in harneys redy the Wednesday next enseyng, in the forest at a certayn place, as couertly as they myght, wythout any noyse. And also he cōmaunded that none should be so hardy, that matter to shew to syr Isembart, his cosyn.

And Arthur all this season was in the castel with Josserans broder: and there he had ryght great chere, and Brysebar also; and there they were richely serued & honoured; & the wounded knight was as than through hole, and was amonge them. And the next day betymes they herde masse; and thā Arthur went to his horse, and with him Brysebar, Josseran, and his broder, and Gouvernar, Bawdewyn, & Jaket, and viii. other

knightes; so that they were in all to the nombre of xiiii. persons: and so they rode forth til they came to the same moūtayne where as Arthur mette with Josseran, who than sayd: Syr, in this place ye made me to retourne agayn, whan I pursued after syr Isembart. That is trouth, sayde Arthur. Well, syr, sayde Josseran, I had wende it had ben you vereli; but than ye shewed me how that ye had wounded hym: but, syr, I know well he had rather die than he wolde be vnreuēged, his hert is so fel; & syr, I know wel that there is not a more traytour in al the worlde, for he doth all his dedes by false treasō: therfore, syr, I doubte greatly of hym least that he haue falsly laide some wayte on your retourne, and so thinke to be reuenged on you: therfore, after myne opyniō, we shal take our harneys what so euer fortune. In the name of God, sayde Arthur, I agre wel therto. Thā they all tooke theyr harneys, & rode forth fayre & softly, til they came to the same place where as the busschement of theyr enemyes were. And there was syr Fyrmont, & xl. other knightes with him on horsback, and xxiiii. on fote. And whan they sawe Arthur and his company, they mounted on theyr horses, and sowned a great horn, and therewith all they came forthe in to the playne. And whan Arthur saw them, he demaunded of Josserā, what people they were, and whether he knew them or not? And he answered, and sayd: Syr, it is syr Fermont & all his power, who is cosyn germaine vnto the Duke of Bygors neuēw, and broder to the knyght that ye slew, therfore he cometh on you for your yll: therfore there is nothīg to do now, but let eche of vs do our deuoyre to defende our liues. Well, sayde Brysebar, and I shall do my part. And by my fathers soule, sayd Gouvernar, & I shall not be behynde. And therewithall the busschement brake out of the woode, and ranne all at ones on Arthurs company. And Brysebar encountred so rudely with the first, y^t he put his spere clene through his body, and so he fell downe dead in the place: than he drew out hys swerde, and strake so an other, that hys head flew into the felde. Than Gouvernar strake one so with his spere, that he ouerthrew bothe horse and man to the erth: and than, w^t his swerde, he strake so an other, that he claue his head to the tethe; and so dasht into the prese,

and layde on with such strokes, that he slew and bare downe all that he attayned vnto. Than came Josseran, & at this first meeting he ouerthrewe two downe to the erth. And whan Arthur sawe his company do soo valyauntly, he had great ioye. And at last he espyed syr Fyrmount, where as he had beten downe to the erth syr Brysebar. Than he dasht his horse w^t hys spurres, and couched hys spere, & strake syr Fyrmont so rudely, that he sent bothe knyght and horse flatte to the erth, ryght sore astonyed, and so laye a greate space: and at the last his people remounted him agayne. Than Arthur thruste into the prese, with his good swerde Clarēce in hys hande: and the fyrste that he encounterd, he strake hym wyth suche vertue, that he claue hym to the sholdres; & fro an other he toke of the head; and layd on amonge his enemyes on euery syde w^t suche strokes, that he confounded all that euer he touched: for he cut of armes, legges, handes, and heades, and dyd meruaylouslye with his hande; for he made as greate waye afore hym, as though his enemyes had ben vnarmed, for theyr armure coude not withstand the weyght of hys strokes: how be it, he and his company were but xiiii. in nombre, & his enemyes were well to the nombre of ccc., and also euer they encreased in the nombre; for syr Fyrmont had sent his cōmaundement to the castell of the Roche, and to the marches there about.

And so it fortunied, that whā syr Fyrmont was remoūted, he was moche sorowfull bycause of hys people that he sawe so sore ouerladen; & therwyth he dasht to his horse, and strake Josseran so rudely, that he ouerthrew hym cleane fro his hors, and by clene force toke hym prisoner. And whā Gouvernar sawe that, he lyfted vp his swerde, & strake syr Firmōt so rudely on the helme, y^t he cut of clene a large hande brede therof, and the stroke descended downe on his shelde, & claue it asonder in y^e myddes; & fro thens y^e stroke dyde lyght on the horse necke, & strake of the horse heed clene fro the body, and therwith syr Fyrmont fell downe to the erth; & than those that heldē Josseran fast dyde let hym goo at large, bycause they went to helpe theyr mayster, who as thā was sore handeled by Gouvernar: & than Brysebar brought to Josseran an other horse, y^t he had wonne fro a knyght, & so

quykly Josseran lepte vp theron, & dasht agayne in to y^e prese ; & than syr Firmont was remoūted agayne on his hors. Than he caused a grete horne to be sowned, & than his people rayled theym togyther, & xl. of theym in a flocke togyder ran all at ones on Brisebar, and on Gouvernar, and on Josseran, and so closed them aboute, and strake them on euery syde. And whā Arthur saw that, he rusht in the thickest of that prese, and brake downe and ouertourned all that euer was before hym, & bette downe knyghtes merueylously, of that al fledde before hym, as lambes doth fro the wolfe. But than there fell on Arthur vii. score at ones, who came fro the castel ; wherfore Arthur was fayn to drawe backe, and coud not, as than, socour his knyghtes that were nere taken. And so than syr Fyrmontes cōpany kylled Gouvernars horse vnder hym. Than Gouvernar layde on wyth hys swerde on all sydes, and maymed and slewe manye knyghtes ; and Brysebar and Josseran dyd helpe hym full manly with all theyr power. And at the last, Gouvernar aduysed wel a knyght, who al the daye before had doone hym moche trouble, and strake hym so rudely wyth hys swerde, that he dasht it clene thrughe hys body : and soo he toke hys horse, and mounted theron in the spyte of all his enemyes. Than he rusht agayne into the prese, and layde on with myghty strokes rounde aboute hym. And at the laste these people on fote slewe both Brisebar and Josserans horses vnderneath them : and lyke valyaunt knyghtes they lept on theyr fete, and by grete vertue defended themselfe : but the prese was so thycke & so grete, & they wer ouercharched wyth the people on foote, y^t by clene force they were taken prysoners. And thā they al rā on Gouvernar, and kylled agayne his hors vnder hym, and there he valyauntely didde defende hymselfe meruayllouslye wyth his handes. And whan he saw hymselfe at that myscheue, & his felawship takē prysoners, he sayd : A ! gentyll Arthur ! God be thy helpe, and kepe the fro dethe, for we are downe and ouercome. And whan Arthur herde that, and saw how they were takē, thā he abandoned his hert and body to rescowe his knyghtes : & so dashte into the prese, & fyersly layde on rounde aboute hym on euery syde, and dressed hymselfe towarde Gouvernar ; but it auayled hym nothyng,

for Gouvernar, Brisebar, and Jossērā, were taken, and led forth toward the castel. And whan Arthur sawe theym so ledde forth, he was right sorowful, and therwith he dyd so moche, that it was grete meruayle to beholde hym: for he brake asonder the grete preces, & all y^t euer he attayned vnto went to deth: so that the hardyest y^t was there, was in grete fere to encoūter hym: but the prese was grete that dydde folow after him, and did cast at him euery thing that they coude gette, thinkyng eyther to slee hym or elles his horse: and they that led his knyghtes to the castell warde were as than entred into a narowe causy, the whyche brought them to a grete ryuer, the whiche they muste passe ouer by shyppe, for there was no brydge. And so they entred into the shyp, and hasted them very fast to enter into the castel with theyr prysoners. And whā Arthur sawe howe that he had lost his iii. knyghtes, he dyde and aduentured hym selfe so ferre, that there was neuer knyghte that euer dyd suche an enterpryse before: but he had neuer no maner of feare, ne neuer doubted creature. Than he lyghted of hys hors, & as by fortune there was another shyp departynge fro the londe syde, and therwith he ioyned togyder his fete, and lept of the londe into the shyppe among all his enemies, and his good swerd drawen in his hande: and the fyrste that he encountred, he claue his head to the chyn; and alwayes the shyppe sayled toward the castel: & he delt suche strokes among them, that for feare manye of them lepte into the water, & so were drowned, & the remenaūt slaine. And at the last y^e shippe drew so nere to the castell wall, that they that were wⁱⁿ the castell dyd cast downe greate hokes of yren, & therewith drewe the shyp to the shore: and than they ran to theyr harneys, & toke theyr crosbowes & other wepens of warre. Than Arthur lepte out of the shyp, and toke one of the grappers of yren and did fasten it surely to a rynge in the castell wall, to thentent that the shyp shoulde not departe thens. And they of the castel did shote and caste greate stones and barres of yren at hym, but alwayes he couered him selfe w^t his whyte shelde, so y^t he coude not be hurte; for suche was the vertue of the sheld, that it coude neuer be enpayred. And the mayster of the castell caused the greate bell

to be sowned, wherwith all the people of y^e castell were moued, and yssued oute in to the felde, & flocked rounde aboute Arthur: & there was than so greate noyse, y^t it was wonder to here; & Arthur helde in his hande Clarence his good swerde, soo that there was none that approached nere hym, but shortely he rendred his life.

And all this season there was a gret sorte that kept Arthurs knyghtes, & shamefully delte with theym, that it was grete pyte to se: for some pulled them by theyr heres, and some by theyr berdes, & some bette them w^t grete staues, & some cryed: Downe with them, sle them out of hand. And yf syr Fyrmont had not commaunded the contrary, they had bene al slayne & they had had a M. lyues, for they were sorer chafed agaynst them, than wilde bores be whan they be hunted. And than whan syr Fyrmont had taken the remenaunt of syr Brisebars knyghtes, than he retourned to the castel & all his people, the which were well to the nombre of ii. hōdred; & alwayes his people encreased more & more, for they repayred to hym of all the townes and countrees adioyning about hym. And so they passed ouer the ryuer. Than he cōmaunded y^t the knyghtes that were taken prisoners sholde be ledde forth into the grete dongeon of the castell, and there to be vnarmed: and as he cōmaūded, so it was done. And so Arthur saw howe they were ledde in to the castel; but the prese ware so grete that he coude not come at them. Than came syr Fyrmont & thre score with hym on horsbacke, and all they set at ones on Arthur, and dasht at hym with speres, and dydde shote at hym grete quarelles, & caste many a grete stone at his head. And whan Arthur sawe y^t he was so sore handled amōnge them, and perceyued well it was harde for hym to escape the grete daūger that he was in, thought inwardly to hīselfe, that he wolde sell his lyfe dere or he lost it: and therwith he laūced hymselfe, & lepte into the myddes of the prease wyth his good swerde in his hande, & layde on rōūde aboute hī as freshely as thoughe he had not fought of all the day before; & so made a wyde way euer before hym, & dyd so valyauntly, that some of the knyghtes that were enemyes had of hym grete pyte, and soo somewhat withdrewd themselfe, what for pyte, & what for fere, fro doynge of hym ony

hurte; and sayde eche to other: Saynt Marye! what maner of knyght is this! it were grete domage he sholde thus lese his lyfe. And whan syr Fyrmont saw y^t these knyghtes forbare Arthur, he was therwith so sorowfull, y^t he was nygh enraged therby out of his mynde: and so his knyghtes desyred him, for Goddes sake, that he wolde haue pyte on Arthur, seyng that he dydde so nobly that daye in dedes of armes, & also consyderynge y^t there was so many agenste hym: but he sayde he woulde in noo wyse spare hym; but swore freshly, y^t he sholde dye or he departed: & therwith he dashte his horse wyth the spurres, and thoughte to haue stryken Arthur behynde him: but Arthur sawe him comming, and watched wysely his stroke, and let him passe by: & as he passed by, Arthur aduysed him well, and strake at him with Clarēce hys good swerde, & the stroke dyd lyghte betwene the helme and the necke, so that the head flewe clene in to the fyelde, and than the body fell downe to the ground. Thā his knyghtes and people came & wondred al about him. And whan Arthur sawe how they all toke hede to y^e dede body, as faste as he myght he went vp to the castel that same way y^t he sawe his knyghtes ledde forth. And at the last he came to a greate dore of yren, the which as than he found open, & so he entred into the tour, & there he found them that were vnarmynge of Brysebar & his felawes: & than he shytted fast the dore after hym, that none sholde neyther enter nor yssue out: & lyke a wilde lyon he ran on them, & wyth his swerd cut them in peces as the sythe dooth the grasse. And whan Gouvernar sawe Arthur, his mayster, hys herte began to reuyue, for he wende verely y^t he had bene slayne; and his handes were fast tyed togeder; & with his tethe, & with his clene strength, he brast asonder the bindyng wherwyth he was boūd. Than he ran to one of them that bounde hym, and rashed oute of hys handes his wepen, & therewyth he gaue hym suche a stroke, that he desceuered life and body asonder: & than he ranne to the dore, to kepe that none shold escape that waye, for they that came to y^e dore went no more to theyr felawes. And whan they sawe how they were delte with all, & how that theyr felawes were slayne, some of theym for fere lepte oute of the wyndowes into the water,

and so som swam & some were drowned. Thus Arthur delyuered the tour of them all, for there was not one that abode there but he was slayne: & whan he was thus delyuered of hys enemyes, than he came to hys knyghtes that wer boūd faste lyke prysoners, and so lowsed them. And whan Arthur sawe Brysebar so faste bounde and wrapped with cordes, he saide: A! dere frēd, ye were not wonte thus to be nourysshed; yl hape come to that nouryse y^t hath caused you thus to be swathed; & so he unloused him, and also Bawdewin, and Jaket, and such other y^t had ben taken prysoners: & than he closed fast all the dores of the toure, to thentent y^t none shold enter into them; & this toure was right strong, for it was able well to kepe & susteyne iii. monthes x.M. men of warre, so that they wer wel furnyshed with vytayle: but these noble knyghtes had not, as than, within al the tour, of vytayle the moūtenaūce of a peniworth, neyther of mete nor drynke; wherfore God be theyr ayde & comfort for this present time. Let vs leue to speke of thē, and let vs speke of the Duke of Bygors neuewe, who was sore hurte, lyeng at his castell of the Roche, as ye haue herde before.

CAP. LII.

HOW ARTHUR & HIS COMPANY WERE BESIEGED IN THE PALAIS BY THE DUKE OF BIGOR, BUT, THANKED BE GOD, THEY ESCAPED BY THE SUBTYLL ARTE OF MAYSTER STEUEN, CLERKE TO THE FAYRE FLORENCE OF SOROLOYS.

WHAN the Mayre of the Roche hadde caused the grete comyn bell of the towne to be ronge, the dukes neuewe, as he lay in his bedde sicke, herde it, and demaūded of a seruaūte of his what it myght meane: & his varlet, thinkynge to hyde the couſeyle fro hym, sayde: Syr, it is for nothing. Tel not me that tale, sayd he, for that bell is not ronge but it is for some gret cause; therefore I

charge the to tell me the trouth. Well, syr, quod the varlet, syth ye wyl nedes knowe it, I shal shew you: syr, it is so, syr Fyrmonte, your cosyn, caused the knyght y^t wounded you to be watched, in so moche, y^t as nowe he hath founde hym: & therefore he had somoned all the people of this towne & countre aboute to come to hym, to thentent eyther to take or to slee this sayd knyght and al his company. Why, sayde syr Isembarte, are they than fyghtynge togyder, & is he not yet taken? Syr, sayd the varlet, I can not tell you.

And as they were thus talkynge togyder, there cam to them into y^e chambre a knyght sore wounded, bledige fast, and sayd to the dukes neuewe: Syr, it is nowe worse than euer it was, for sir Fyrmont is slayne, & his heed stryken of. And whan syr Isembarte herde that, he sate him vp in his bedde, & demaūded of the hurte knyght, who had done y^t dede. Syr, sayd he, the same knyght that slewe his broder, and wounded you. Well, good frende, & is not the same knyghte slayne? No, no, syr, sayde the knyght, I thinke verely he be noo man, but rather a fende of hell, for he doubteth no maner of thyng; for he confoundeth all that euer he attaineth vnto: for this daye he hathe sustayned soo muche by his body, that he hath shedde the blode of v. hondred persones, & cōfounded & slayne moo than can well be spoken of or nombred, wyth the good helpe of his company, who are right valyant & vygorrus. A! sayd syr Isembart, I am ryght vnhappy if they thus escape me; but I requyre you to tel me wher thei be? In good fayth, syr, quod the knyght, they are in yonder grete toure, where as were all the prisoners that were taken: but, sir, whan these deuylles came thyder, there were but few y^t escaped death: and so they haue loused all the prysoners, & haue fast shette them selfe within the tour, so that none can come at them. Well, thā, I charge the goo make a crye & reyse vp all my men of warre, & let them besiege the tour rounde aboute, and pytche vp my paulyons & tentes, for surely I wyll famysh them or they get thens. Than anon the crye was made throughtout all the towne, and the dukes neuewe tent was pyght vp, & hymselfe borne into it. And than he sente all aboute the coun-

trye, & cōmaunded euery man that was able to bere harneys, to come to hym in all haste possible. And there resorted to hym wel to y^e nombre of v. hondred or aboue, & so lodged themselfe rounde aboute the toure. And than syr Isembarte cōmaunded straytly, that none shold be so hardy to assayl the toure, tyll suche season as he were clene hole of his woūdes, and tyll the Duke of Bygor, his vnclē, were comen to hym: for he sware grete othes, he wolde sle Arthur and his cōpany al quyeke with his owne handes, & than drye them in the sonne.

Thus syr Isembarte rayled on these noble knyghtes, who were as then lokyng out of the wyndowes of the toure: & than they saw right well, how that people came & lodged rounde aboute theym in the toure. And Bawdewyn & Jaket were loking out at another wyndowe into the townwarde, & there they espyed, ioyninge to the same toure, a ryghte fayre manner, besemingē as stronge a hous as coude be deuysed, closed aboute wth stronge hye walles, & grete gates bounde with grete barres of yren, wyth drawe brydges & porte colyces, & wel holwarked & fausbrayed, and a grete & a depe water beting on the walles; to saye the trouth, this place was right stronge: and within this hous they sawe a chymney ryght sore smokyng, and also they smelled the kechyn, & felte wel the sauour of roste & fryed mete: & so ther was in dede; for there was ordeyned all the mete y^t the dukes neuewe & hys company sholde haue had, for it was the dongeon y^t belonged to the Duke of Bygor. A! good Lord! quod Bawdewyn, I wold I wer in yonder kechyn wth yonder good mete, for than I wolde ete before my mayster, for I haue gret hunger. And I also, quod Jaket. And it was thā past noon, & these noble knyghtes had eten no mete of all y^t daye before. Than Josseran sayd: I thāke God I had a good physicien, for I am nowe all hole; but I wold now fayne ete some mete. By my faders soule, & I also, quod Gouvernar. Well, quod Bawdewyn, syr Gouvernar, & ye wyll come hyder, ye may drynke of this smoke as I do, wherby your hongre may be well aswaged. And than Arthur & his company wente thyder to behold fro whens the smoke came: & whan Arthur beheld the fayre place, so strōg & so ryche

buylded, & herde betynge in the morters within the kechyn, & might here how the cokes called for wine & spice, he sayd to Brysebar: Frende, me thynketh these cokes in yonder kechyn haue somewhat to do, for they be very besy; in faith I wyl go & helpe them. And whā Gouvernar herde him say so, he said, that gladly he wolde turne the broche. A! good Lorde! said Brysebar, what a lad of the kechyn wold ye be! In good fayth, I thynke veryle ye wolde soone bete downe your mayster. Than they all began to laugh. Wel, quod Arthur, there is no more say, but let vs do all well our partes; for surely, yf it be possyble, thyder wyl I go, & put som salt into the grewel. Ye, syr, ye be a veri good coke, quod Bawdewyn, ye may well sel trypes in the market. And thus they sported them eche w^t other. Than Arthur aduysed wel the flore of the chambre wherin he was, & espyed well how y^t there were stages vnderneath the flore. Than he sayde to his company: Let vs breke vp the pauement of this flore, & than we may se wel what thyng is vnderneath. So than they toke theyr hawbertes, & bylles, and suche other wepens as was brought thider by them y^t conuayed the prisoners into that chambre, the whiche were than all slayn and cast out at the wyndowes; & so they dasht these wepēs into the pauemente of square stones, & with great labour brake them vp; & there they made soo greate an hole, y^t they myght well se all thyng that was vnderneath the chābre, but the vawte was very darcke: and than the called, to knowe whether any body was there or not; but there was none that answered thē. At the last Arthur espyed where there was a chayne of yren faste rebat in to the wall, and the one ende attayned to the flore of the chaumbre, and the other ende was fast tyed to a great chest of the wall. Than Arthur toke the chayne in his handes, and slypped downe thereby tyll he came to the crest of the wall: and ther was a lytle wyndowe, whereby there entred a lytle lyghte, soo that he myghte wel se the bottome of the vawte: & than he espyed well that he myghte breke the wall wheron he stode, and myghte than soone come to the earthe. Than he caused all theyr harneys to be broughte downe to the sayde creste, and all his companye. Than they brake downe the stones of the wall, and dyd caste them

downe, and euer reysed the stones deper and deper vnder theyr fete: euer they stode lower & lower, tyll at the last they cam downe to y^e erth wythout onye hurte or damage. Than they found a lytle dore of yren, the whych was shette without with iiii. grete barres of yren, the whiche dore opened agenste the sayd strong place where as the mete was a rostynge. Than these knyghtes thought to arme them, & than to breke vp the dore; and so they dyd: and whan they were armed, than they toke greate peces of tymber that laye in the vaute, & Arthur ran at the dore with suche randon, y^t it made a ryght greate noyse: and the same tyme the dukes treasourer was gone to se the dead corps of syr Firmōt, the which was layd on a bere, to be borne to the chyrche to be buried; & with him were gone al y^e people of the towne, sauynge those y^t were lodged aboute the toure, so y^t there was not left in the sayd place no creature, but all onely the cokes y^t were in the kechyn dressynge of theyre mete; nor there was none y^t was ware how that Arthur was brekinge vp the doore of the toure wythin. And there Arthur and his companye dyd so much, that they brake vp the dore, and so entred into a gardyn. Thā Arthur sayd to his company: Syrs, go quycklye to the gate & drawe vp the brydge, and I wyl go, in the meane season, in to the kechyn to the cokes. Ha! ha! sayd Bawdwin, I am sure my mayster hathe felte the sauour of the smoke, the which he thinketh ryght good, whereby he hath gette him a good appetyte. Wel, sayd Arthur, do as I haue shewed you, & than ye shal do right well. And so they went all togyder to the gates, and dyde shyttle thē faste, and lyfte vp the brydges; & than they were so sure, that they doubted no man. And in the meane season Arthur entred into the kechyn, and began to crye out: Auaunt out of this hous, ye foule rybaude knaues! for ye shall all dye. And whan the cokes sawe Arthur, they knewe well it was he that vaynquyshed syr Fyrmont, wherewyth they were so sore abasshed, y^t they fledde away, and cried out, and sayd, how the deuyll of hell had brought hym in to that hous: but Josseran and Brysebar were at the dore, and receyued, and gaue them such dyscyplyne, that it oughte not to be cōtrowled. And Gouvernar & Bawdewyn kept so

the gate, & tourned theim agayne, that there abode not one on lyue. Than Brisebar and Gouvernar toke the dead bodyes, and dydde cast them out at the wyndowes and batylmentes of the hye wall. And syr Fyrmont was lyenge on a bere, and caryed on mēnes sholders, and passed there by the walle of the same hous where as Arthur and hys company were: and as he passed vnder y^e wall, Arthur & his company didde cast downe the deed bodyes on the bere. And whan syr Isembartes seruauntes sawe y^t, they knew ryght well that the dukes fortres was taken: and soo they wente and shewed it to theyr mayster, wher withall he was gretely enraged, and cōmaunded, in all haste, to assaile the place: where as Arthur and his companye were on the walles, and defended themselfe valyaūtly, that theyr enemyes dyd lytell preuayle agaynst them. And Arthur was ofentymes in wyll to haue yssued out to haue fought with his enemyes, but Brisebar wolde not suffer hym: and verely and it had not bene more for feare of his company than for hym selfe, he wolde haue sette open the gates. And whan they without saw that they coude not preuayle, they seased theyr assaute, & wythdrewe themselfe. And Arthur & his company wente and vnarmed them, and Bawdwyn and Jaket couered the tables, and serued Arthur and his felawshyp ryght rychely, for there was in that hous bothe wyne and vytayle suffy- cyent for an hole yere. And thus ryghte well at theyr ease they remayned xv. dayes w^tout fere of theyre enemyes, and wythoute ony grete hurte.

Thus wyll we leue to speake of Arthur and his company, and shewe somewhat of mayster Steuen.

CAP. LIII.

HOWE MAYSTER STEUEN, BY THE VERTUE OF HIS ARTE OF
NYGROMANCY, DELYUERED ARTHUR & HIS COMPANY FRO
PERYLL & DAUNGER OF THE DUKE OF BYGOR & HIS NEUEWE.

DURYNG the time that Arthur and his knightes wer thus besyeged in the Duke of Bygors fortresse, mayster Steuen, clerke to the noble lady Florence of Soroloys, & the noble Markes, were all this ceasō at the Port Noyre, loking out at the windowes of the palayes, talkynge togyder of Arthur, thinkynge longe for hym, for it was more than viii. dayes sythe the promesse that he made of his retour; wherfore they were in greate sorowe & in grete fere leaste he were slayne by the foule monster of the Brosse. Wel, sayd mayster Steuen, syr Markes, abyde me here tyll I retourne to you agayne, and than I shall shewe you how the case standeth. Than the mayster entred in to his chambre, and toke his bokes, and loked so longe on them tyll he knewe well all the estate of Arthur and of his company. Than he wente agayne to the Markes, and recounted to hym all the state of Arthur and of his felawshyp, howe that they were besyeged in the castel, and how that the Duke of Bigor was, with xl. thousande men, come to the castell of the Roche for to helpe his neuwe: wherfore he sayd: There is now nothyng to do but to study for theyr delyuerance, the whiche, he sayd, was harde to do without his counseyle and aduyse. A! gentyll mayster, sayd the Markes, whan nede cometh, than is the frende knowen: for Goddes sake make hast for theyr delyueraunce. Syr, sayd the mayster, ye shall kepe this castel, and I wyll go to theym; and put to my payne to delyuer them. And so he departed fro the Markes, and entered in to his chaumbre and toke his bokes, and dyde so moche, that at the last he had al thyng that he demaunded; and than, by hys connyng, he caused hym selfe to be borne in to the same hall where Arthur and his cōpany were lenyng & lokinge oute at the wyndowes, beholdynge the dukes hoost, who was as than come and had lodged hym selfe and

all his company aboute the palays: & by that tyme syr Isembart was all hole, and was able to ryde where as he wolde all armed; & soo he came to the duke, hys vncle, and recounted to hym al his aduenture. Well, fayre neuewe, sayde the duke, take noo thought therfore, for, by the fayth that I owe vnto you, it shal be dere bought.

And in the same meane season mayster Steuen was come in to the palays, and stode behynde Arthur or that he was ware thereof, and layde his hande on his sholdre; and therwyth Arthur tourned him aboute, and whan he sawe mayster Steuen, he clepid hym in his armes, and so dydde Brysebar, Josseran, and Gouvernar, and all other, & made hym right greate chere, and demaunded of him howe he was entered in to that place. Well, said the mays-ter, how so euer ye haue kepte the place, yet I haue doone so moche, that I am nowe entred. Mary! that is trouth, sayd Gouvernar, or elles be we sore abused. Thus they made greate feaste and joye all that nyghte: and the nexte mornyng they rose betymes, and loked out at the wyndowes, and beheld the dukes host. And than Arthur sayde, how that he wolde issue out & go fyght with his enemyes, but Brisebar wolde not suffre hym; at which tyme they had wende that mayster Steuen had be stil abed on slepe, for he was not as than come out of his chaumbre: how be it, he was aboute to studye for theyr delyueraunce: for, as sone as he was out of his bed, he toke his bokes and made his coniuracions, wherby he caused such a tempest of winde and rayne to ryse and fal in the dukes host without, that it brast downe tentes, & ouer-threw paulions, and rusht downe standerdes, and tare downe lodgynges, and haled asonder ropes, and dasht downe al to the erth; & with the wynde there was blowē vp in to the ayre streemers, towels, and other clothes, so hie, that the syght of thē was clene lost. And Arthur and his compani whan they perceyued all this without in the host, they had great meruayle, for it was a fayre and a clere mornyng before. And whan this storme was somewhat seased, than there rose out of the grounde such a derke myst and so stynkyng, that scant one man could se an other; and this myst hanged ouer all the dukes hoost, and ouer all his castell and

towne, except the fortresse where as Arthur and his company were in; wherfore they dyd close al the wyndowes, & dyd lyght vp candels: but thys myst endured so longe, that al they of the dukes host, and also within his castell & towne, were fulfilled with the sauoure therof. And at the laste it seased, and the wether began to waxe cleare and fayre: and so than it fortunied that all suche as hadde felte the sauour of the foule mist, theyr hertes began to fayle them, and to be so full of cowardyse & fere, as though they had ben chased with an hondred thousande men of armes: and oftentimes behelde towarde the fortresse where as Arthur and his company were, alwaye feryng lest they wolde haue yssued out on them. And as they loked towarde the mountaynes, to theyr heryng, they herde x. thousand hornes and trompettes, wenyng verely that it had ben true; and than, to theyr syghtes, they saw so much people descending downe fro the mountaynes, that all the earth was couered with harnysed men. Than they were in greater fere than they were before; and at the last they thought they saw descende downe fro an hye hyll the chiefe standarde and baner of the mightye Kynge Emēdus, wherin was portrayed a flambyng dragon of golde. And on an other syde they perceyued where came the King of Orqueney, and with him a great multytude of men of warre: & so throughout all the host there rose a great rumour & a saying, how y^t the mighty Kynge Emēdus, with all his chyualry, was comen on them, to rescow his knight, syr Brisebar, whome they had besyeged with Arthur in y^e dongeon; & so therby thei were so dyscomfyted within theyr owne fantasyes & ymaginaciōs, y^t what on horsebacke & on fote they fled all awaye as fast as they might; and he that coude get his sadel, dyd set it on his horse, & some for hast lept on theyr horsebacke wythout any sadell or brydell, & fled away all dysmayed, some in the wodes, and some in the riuers, and into the great mareyses, they wyst not whider. And Arthur & his cōpany, whan they saw al this, they had great meruayle. In the name of God, sayd Gouvernar, I trow they wyl fysshe for eles, behold how some of them bayne themselfe in the maris. And, at the last, tidinges came to the duke, how that his men fled awai: and anone he lept

on his horse, for his herte was as sore afrayd as any other, & so he fled away also as fast as he coulde to saue hymself. And his seruaūtes, that were within his castell, ran all aboute the hous to seke a place to hide them in: and some did close thēself fast within the ground, in a lo vaute of the castel, and some hid theym vnder empty pypes and other vessels, for fere of spying. And syr Isembarte fled into the greate abbey chyrche, and mounted vp to the hye vawtes for to hyde hym there. And the monkes, nonnes, and prestes, and clerkes, and chanons, ran to the chyrches of the towne, & kneled downe & confessed themself eche to other, knocking themself on theyr brestes w^t great repentaunce of theyr mysdedes, thinking verily neuer to die other death.

Thā mayster Steuen issued oute of his chambre, and went into the hall where as Arthur was. And Josseran said: Maister, for Gods sake come hyder, & beholde how the duke and his men do flie away! I thynke they be afrayd. In the name of God, said the master, I thinke they be not at this time well assured of thēselfe, therfore shortely take your harneys, & lette vs go mete the mighty King Emendus, who is coming to rescowe his knyght here, syr Brisebar. And whā Arthur herd that, he and all his cōpany armed them, and so opened the gates and wēt to the dukes tentes, where as they fōūd good and myghty horses, & there eche of them toke a good horse, such as lyked thē best; for there were none to withstande them, for they were al clene ffedde away, and not one left behynde. So than they all mounted on theyr horses, and issued out of the tentes, and toke theyr way vp towarde the moū-taynes, where as Arthur and his company thought that they saw, by semyng, al the worlde of men coming towardes them, & heryng hornes and trompes sownyng, and braying of hornes, glistering of helmes, shining of sheldes, waueryng of stremers & penselles: and at the last they espyed the flambing dragon of golde in the great baner of Soroloys; and also, as to theyr syght, they saw all the foure kinges w^t al theyr power coming: so that, by semyng, all the erth was couered with people. And Arthur greatly meruayled of the great noblenesse of the King Emēdus, that brought so great a multitude of people. Sir, as God helpe me, sayd

mayster Steuen, yet here is not all his strength, for here is nothing of the power of my ladi Florence, his doughter, nor none of the cōtrey of Argenton. Verily, syr, sayd Brisebar, to say the trouth, he is the mightiest king y^t now reygneþ in al the worlde.

And so they rode forth thus talkyng, til at the last they met with the formest cōpany of the kynges hooste, the whyche made great chere & feest to mayster Steuen, to Brysebar, and to Jossaran, suche as knew them. And so they rode forth tyll they mette with the kinges baner & flambyng dragon, the which was born by the senesshal of the lady Florēce, who made great chere to Brisebar. And thus Arthur rode euer forth, wenyng verelye that all this that he saw and herde had ben of trouth, for he wend ful lytle that all this had ben wrought by mayster Steuens werke and crafte. And thus euer Arthur rode forth the space of ii. leges, and euer stil encountred much people; and at the last they met with the noble Kinge Emendus, who made righte great chere & feest to mayster Steuen, & to Brysebar, & demaunded of them, how they had done, & how they came into the pryson? Syr, & it like your grace, said sir Brysebar, thanked be God, we doo ryght wel: for we were delyuered out of daūger by the only prowesse of this noble knight that ye se here in our companye, who hath done so much in dedes of chyualry, that it cannot be deuysed. And thus, as they talked together, maister Steuē fordid his enchauntement, & than the king & al his great host assembled were clene vanished away, so that there was in syght no mo creatures but all onely Arthur and his company; wherw^t they were al sore abasshed, and eche of them behelde other and spake neuer a worde, thinking how they had dremed. In the name of God, sayd Arthur, I haue greate meruayle. Mary! syr, quod Brisebar, I spak right now with the king, my souerayne lorde, & now I wot not where he is become. Well, syr, quod master Steuen, let vs ryde on forthe; for now ye may se wel how that we be out of the daūger of our enemies. Than Arthur perceyued wel, that all this was done by y^e craft of master Steuē, bycause of theyr deliueraūce. So thus they rode forth til it was none of the day, euer talkyng of theyr aduentures: & at last, agaynst night, they descēded downe of a great moun-

tayne, & the valey beneth was very obscure & derke, so that they coude se but a litle way into it: and whan they were nie to it, thei apperceued where as there yssued oute therof iiii. varlettes on feble horses, ech of them hauinge a brenninge torche in theyr handes; & in theyr company an abbot, who was a white monke, & iiii. other monkes w^t him: and they were veri lene and pale, and but febly horsed. And whan Arthur saw them, he rested, and salewed them. And the abbot dyd of hys hode, and salewed Arthur and all his cōpany: and bycause he saw Arthur of so fayre a stature, he thought verlye y^t he was the chiefe of his company. And than he sayd to Arthur: Syr, I herde reported but late, how y^t a knight hath acheued the harde aduētures of the Porte Noyre. Syr, if it be so, he is of great valure; and therefore I am in purpose to ride thider, & to cōplayne to hī of the gret wronges that hath ben done to me: for, syr, as pore as I seme now, yet I was wonte to be the moste honoured abbot in al the couētre of Argenton, & now I am lest set by, for my couēt is clene destroyed: for it is now wel v. yere sith one of Goddes seruyce was sayd in my chyrche; nor there was no light, neither of sonne nor mone, that entred into it of all that season; and all our landes and tentes are clene lost: wherfore many of my couēt be dead, what for sorowe, and what for necessite. And al this is done vnto vs bi the Duke of Bygors broder; that I praye to God, and euer shall, that he may dye a shameful deth. And, syr, how that al this is fortunēd, I shal shew you, & it please you to here me: Syr, I haue plained me to euery noble man that I mete, to thētēt to haue some succour of them to get me my ryght agayne: but I can mete wyth none that wyll helpe or ayde me: therefore I wyll goo and complayne me to the gentyll knight y^t hath done so much prowesse at y^e Porte Noyre, if it be my fortune to fynde hym. Syr, I know not what you be; how be it, I complaine me to you as I haue done to many other. By the mother of God! quod Arthur, I wold be right gladde to helpe you to your right, and therto I shall be gladde to put my good wyl: wherof the abbot thanked hym, & so did al the other monkes. Than mayster Steuen desyred them to go in company with them to the Porte Noyre; and promysed, yf they wolde so do,

that they shold speke w^t the same knight that thei seke for. And thā at last the abbot kñew wel mayster Steuen, & cleped, & kyssed him, & made right great joye, & sayd : A ! gentyll mayster, is the knight y^t I seke for, in your cōpany or not ? As God help me, quod the master, it is the same knight that ye haue al this season spoken vnto : and he, by his prowesse, hath losed out of pryson the noble Markes, your owne broder. And than the abbot helde vp his hādes toward the heuen, and sayd : Hie & mighty King of Paradise celestial ! encrease in that noble knight honour & boūte ! Thā the abbot aduysed wel Brisebar & Josseran, and knewe them ryght well, and made with them great joye and feast.

And thus they rode forth so longe, tyl at the last they ariued at Porte Noyre, and so descended fro their horses, & moūted vp to the palays. And whan the noble Markes sawe Arthur, he made to hym ryght great chere ; & whan he sawe the abbot, who was his owne broder, he began to wepe for pitie, whan he remēbred the death of the lorde of Argenton, hys broder. And so eche of them embraced other, w^t great wepyng for ioye. And than the abbot sayd : I pray to God y^t he maye die an euyl deth that hath slaine our broder, the gentyl lorde of Argenton ; wherby great hurt and damage is come to my chyrche. And I pray the same, said y^c Markes, for therby is our nece, the lady of Argēton, dysherited, wrongfully, & w^tout cause : and therwith they wept eche to other right piteously, wherof Arthur and his company had great pitie. And thā Arthur said to them : Lordes, be of good comforte, for I promyse you I wyll be at her mariage, yf I may : and if the lady haue than any nede of helpe, I shal be redie to ayde her to the best of my power. And the two brethern thanked him muche ; and so they vnarmed them, & were there in great joy and sport.

Now let vs leue to speke of them, & we wil trete of the messenger that bare the head of y^c monster to the court of King Emendus, and to the fayre Florence.

CAP. LIV.

HOW THE NEUEW OF BRYSEBAR ARIUED AT THE COURTE OF Y^e MIGHTY KYNGE EMENDUS WITH THE HEAD OF THE MONSTER, & DYD SALUTE THE KYNG, AND ALSO THE EMPEROUR OF YNDE, WHO WAS STYL IN THE COURTE ATTENDING THAT THE KING SHOLD GIVE HIM IN MARIAGE HIS DOUGHTER, THE FAYRE FLORENCE: AND TO HER THE HEAD OF THE MONSTER WAS PRESENTED FROM ARTHUR, AND SHEWED HER HOW THAT ALL ONLY, BY HIS NOBLE PROWESSE, HE HAD SLAYNE THE TERRIBLE MONSTER OF THE BROSE.

So it was, that whan Brysebars newest was departed fro thens, as the monster was slayne, he rode so longe tyll he aryued at a citie named Phesale, where as the kynge was, and the emperour in his companye, who wolde in no wyse departe tyll that the kynge hadde gyuen hym the fayre Florence to be hys wyfe. And also there was in the courte at the same tyme, the Kynge of Orqueney, cosyn germayne vnto the fayre Florence. The court was as than great and sumptuous, and the kynge had as than hearde masse, and was retourned into his palays, and the emperour with him; and also there was Florence, accompanied with many ladyes & damoyseles: & the Kinge of Orqueney was there, accompanied with many other great lordes & knightes, talking together of a torney that should be made at Droseme. And in this meane season, Cristeline, newest to Brisebar, moued vp to the steyses, & two greute lubbers brought after hym the heed of the monster, in a great basket couered ouer wyth towels: & so entred vp into the palais, & there euery bodi made him right great chere & feast: & therw^t he came before the kyng. And whan the king saw hi comyng, he had right great joy, and demaunded how Brisebar dyd, & whether that he had slayne the monster or not? As God helpe me, quod syr Crystelyne, mine vncle doth ryght well: but as to the sleynge of the monster he is nothyng gylty, nor none of



all his company: for all onely one noble knight hath slayne the mōster; the whiche knight, by his prowesse, hath acheued all the ferefull aduētūres of the Porte Noyre. He is the moste fayre knight, & the most gracious, that euer I saw w^t min eyen. And whan he saw the fayre Florence siting by the king, her father, he kneeled downe to the erth, & said: Right dere lady, this sayd noble knight sendeth to your noble grace, for a presēt, the head of the sayd monster, as to the most hye & puissaūt lady of the worlde now liuing: and to you he offreth hymselfe, to do all that he may for so noble a lady as ye be. And truly, madame, it shal be a great tresour, to haue and to retain so noble & so valiaūt a knight as he is, for he is the floure of all the worlde, & in bounte surmounting all other. Than the head was dyscouered, and shewed to the kyng and to themperour: and thider ran euery body that was in the courte to beholde it. Than they toke kniues and swerdes and strake at it, but none coude enpayre it, for it was so excedyng harde. Than euery mā praysed much the knight that had slayne the monster, & sayde, how y^t in all the worlde there was not his pere: & some sayd also, y^t this knight is he that hath acheued the aduentures of the Porte Noyre: and the kynge dyd muche prayse hym, and determyned to sende to seke for him. Sende to seke for hym! sayd the King of Orqueney; it were lytle ynough to sende a kynge for hym! for it were not metely for a symple knight to go seke for such a knight of so hie prowesse as he is of. Wel, syr, sayde Crystelyne, Brysebar is abyden w^t hym, & they are gone togither to the Porte Noyre; and, yf he can, he wyll bringe him vnto your courte. Thā all the kinges and princes counseyled the kyng, that he sholde not sende for him, but abyde the cominge of Brisebar.

Than Florence rose, and sayd to the kinge, her father: Syr, and it lyke your grace to giue me leue to departe in to my chambre, for this foule head troubleth me sore to loke therō: & so she toke her leue of the kyng & of the emperour. And whan she was in her secrete chambre, she called to her the Kynge of Orqueney, in whome she faythfully trusted; & so they sat them downe togeder: & than she said: Sir, of great valure is the knight that hath slayne

the monster, and doone so many valyaūt dedes: therefore, I pray you, can you tell me what he is? By the fayth that I owe vnto you, madame, I cannot tell you: but let vs send for Cristelyne, to knowe yf he canne tell vs ony thinge of hys estate.

Than incontinent he was sente for in all the haste: and than Florence caused the chaumbre for to be clene auoyded, sauynge of the Kynge of Orqueneý, and of the quene, his wyfe. And whan Cristeline was come to them, than Florence demaunded of hym, what maner of knight it was that offred his seruyce in such wyse to her? Madame, said he, as God helpe me, I can not shew your grace: but more fayrer, more gracious, nor more gentiller hert of a knight, cannot be founde agayn in all the wyde worlde: nor a goodlier man of armes, nor of hier prowesse, cannot be lightly ymagined. Wel, frend, sayd Florence, and what message hath he sent to me by you? Madame, he shewed me how that he is your knight, & redy to do you seruyce at all times. Myn! said Florēce: and therwith she sighed, and than there entred into her herte a great & a feruent loue: in so much, that al other were clene put out of her minde: & therw^t she stode in a stoudy, without speakinge of anye worde. And than the Quene of Orqueneý demaunded of hym, what armes the knight dyd bere? Madame, sayd he, a chekered armes, and a white shelde. Wel, sayd Florence, is this of trouth? Ye, truly, madame, said the knight; and also he hath a swerde that can helpe no man but hymselfe; but he doth therwith what him list. Madame, I say vnto you, that aboue al other he is the best of all the worlde, & so he is reputed in euery place. Thā was Florence ouercome with loue more thā she was before, & thought wel y^t it was he y^t mayster Steuen, her clerke, abode so lōge for at y^e Porte Noyre. Thā she gaue Cristelyne CC.li. of lāde, for the thīges that he brought her fro the said knight.

CAP. LV.

HOW THAT ARTHUR & MAYSTER STEUEN WENT TO THE GARDEIN PERTAYNING TO THE PALAYS OF THE PORTE NOYRE, AND ENTRED INTO THE RICHE PAULION WHERE AS THE IMAGE WAS HOLDING IN HER HANDES THE CHAPLET, THE WHICH SHE DID SET ON ARTHURS HEAD, IN SIGNIFIENG HOW THAT HE SHOULD HAUE THE FAYRE FLORENCE, TO WHOME THE YMAGE WAS RESEMBLABLE: FOR THERE WAS NONE Y^t SHOULD HAUE FLORENCE IN MARYAGE WITHOUT HE SHOULD DIE AN EUIL DETH, WITHOUT IT WERE HE THAT THE YMAGE DYD GYUE VNTO THE SAYD CHAPLET.

IN the meane tyme that Cristeline, Brysebars neuue, was at y^c court wyth the Kinge Emendus, as ye haue herde before, Arthur and his company were at the Porte Noyre, in greate joye and myrth. And thā the abbot had songe masse, and so they were all togyder in the palays, and entred into the gardyn; and so went talkynge togyther, tyll at last mayster Steuen toke Arthur by the hande, and said, how that he wold speke with him in counsaile. Than they departed togyther fro the other companie, and went talkyng togyder tyll they came to the riche paulion, and entred into it, and stode before the image that helde the chaplet in her handes. Than the mayster sayd: Syr, this ymage is ryght fayre: how be it, the fygure y^t it doth represent is x. tymes fayrer, the whyche is the fayre Florence, doughter to the myghty Kynge Emendus: &, syr, whan y^t she was fyrst borne, she was brought vp into the Moūt of Aduētures, & there was gyuen her this riche paulyon by the quene of the fayry: & there they destenied on her, that no creature shuld haue her in mariage, but all only he that thys ymage shold gyue vnto the chaplet that she holdeth in her handes, as ye may se: & I hope verly it shal be you, bycause of the great prowesse that is in you, & I pray to God it may be so: &, syr, now here is none but you and I, therefore I praye you go to

the ymage, and than we shall know the trouth. A! mayster, sayd Arthur, for Goddes sake I aske mercye: so hye a thing as is the loue of y^e noble lady Florence, is not apertenaunte to so symple a persone as I am; therefore it were foly to me to goo to the ymage, presumynge to attayn to so hye a felicitye. By my head, sayd the maister, ye shall go: & therefore I pray you so to do, for my hearte gyueth me good comfort that ye shal spede. Well, sayd Arthur, syth ye wyll nedes haue me to go, I am content: but first ye shall go before me. With a good wyll, sayd y^e mayster, soo that ye wyll promise to folowe me yf soo be that I mysse. As God helpe me, sayd Arthur, so wyll I do.

Than the mayster went and kneled downe before the ymage: but though he had kneled there x. yere together, he shuld nothing haue spedde: yet he was ryghte fayre, and a good clerke, & right gracious, & also son to a kyng: but, for al that, the ymage did nothinge to him. And whan the mayster sawe that, he rose, & caused than Arthur to do as he dyd, the which he was ryght loth to do: but, at the last, w^t much payne, he kneled downe before the ymage; & incontynente the ymage tourned towarde him, and, to his seming, it blusshed as red as sendall, & fayre and easely the ymage dyd set the chaplet on his heade. And the same season that this ymage dyd set the chaplet on his head, the noble lady Florence was in her chambre, talking with Cristelyne; who tolde her, how y^e knyght that slew the monster had a whyte shield and a sword that could not be enpayred. At the whyche tyme she felte in her herte the vertue of the propertie of the same ymage in the riche pauilion, the which represented her similitude: wherebye there entred into her hert such a loue, that she lost al her countenaūce, & blusshed twise as muche as the ymage dyd before Arthur: and therby, in a maner, she fell in a traunce, & lost the vse of her speache. And whan the Quene of Orqueney saw her in that poynt, she cryed right hiely, and said: Our blessed lady, Saint Mary! saue my lady Florence fro deth or ieoperdy! & than Cristelyne toke her in his armes. Than other ladyes came into the chambre; and whan they sawe her in that poynt, they toke and layde her on her bedde: & anone it was spredde al about the

court, howe y^t the noble Florence was sore sick : wherwith the courte was sore troubled, & the kyng and themperoure were right sory whan they herd therof. And whan that Florence was well come agayne to her selfe, than the Quene of Orqueney demaūded of her, what she ayled, to be in y^t case so sodenly ? And she answered, and sayd, y^t it was because that she remembred the foule horribleness of the head of the dead monster, wherby her herte fayled her.

Than incontinent the kynge cōmaūded that the head shuld be brent, to thentent that it sholde no more be seen : & so it was done in all haste. And as for Arthur he was al this season before the ymage, with the chaplet on his head. And he was than so taken wyth loue, that there was none in al the world that pleased him, but al onely the fygure of her y^t owed the chaplet : and therwith he rose on his fete, and the chaplet on his head. And whan the mayster sawe that, he had neuer so great ioy afore, and sayd : Syr, God encrease in you bounte and noblenesse, for as for honour ye are therwith as now gretelye endued. Syr, now I se, and know wel, that ye shall be my lorde : therfore I owe to you faith and trouth ; and fro hence forth I wyl to you make homage, and holde my lande of you. A ! maister, said Arthur, suffre not your selfe so to say, for the son of a king ought not to holde his lande of so symple a knyght as I am : how be it, the maister dyd so muche, that at the last Arthur receiued him for his man. And whan he had so receyued hym, the maister sayde : My lord, I owe vnto you fayth & troth, and truely that shal I kepe : & from hens forth hardely do somewhat but after my cōsaile : for I shal helpe you to accomplysh this enterprise more than any other mā lyuing. Maister, sayde Arthur, & I shall beleue your counsayl, & put my selfe all onely into your handes : for, as God help me, the loue that is in my hearte greueth me sore, & yet I wote not who it is that I loue. Sir, sayd the maister, take y^c chaplet fro your head, & giue it agayn to the ymage to kepe, tyll ye aske it agayne an other season. Maister, said Arthur, with a good wyl ; & so toke the chaplet, & delyuered it agayne to the ymage. And than the ymage dressed her vp, and stode styll as she dyd before.

Than y^e mayster sayd : Syr Brisebar wil desire you to go to the court wyth him, but ye must deny hym, as for this seasō : for, after my mynd, ye shal first go to acheue the aduentures of the Tenebrous, or Darke Towre : and take with you no company, but only Bawdwyn, your squyer, and ye shall depart to morow betymes : and I wyll go to the court with Brisebar, & shal think ryght wel of euery thing that is behouable for the contentacion of your mynd. In the name of God, said Arthur, so let it be.

And as they wer thus talking together, there came to them y^e abbot, & the Markes, his brother, Gouvernar, & Josseran : & as for Bawdwyn & Jaket, apparayled for the diner in the palais. And than the abbot said to Arthur : Sir, I haue bē here a great season, wherof I thank you : and also I am euer bound vnto you, becaus ye haue deliuered out of pryson my brother, the Markes. Syr, now it is time y^t I retorne agayn vnto my dolorous abbey, y^e whiche was wont to be the floure of beauty of all that country, & now it is the prisō of al vnhappines and mysfortune : & he that hath caused all this, I praye to God that he may die an euyl death, who is sir Isembart, the false neuewe of the Duke of Bygor ; for, by his meanes, a false enchaunter hath taken away clene y^e light of the heauen fro our abbey, so that we lyue euer in darkenes : and also he hath taken away all our rentes and londes, wherwith nye we are therby famished for hungre : & also he hath falsly, by treason, slayne my brother, the noble lorde of Argenton, and hath dysherited my nece, his doughter, and hath gyuen her to a lewde boye, who is his barboure : and now, at this nexte Mawdelyne tyde, he purposeth that they shall be maryed together, the which shall be gret pitie, that euer so good and beautiful a lady as she is, shuld be cast away vpon so vile a person : for yf she were not my nece, I wold saye she were worthy to haue a ryghte good prynce ; wherfore I complayn me to God and to al gentylnes, & specially, syr, humblye I require you to helpe to take vengeaunce of him, and of such as taketh his part. By the fayth y^t I owe vnto the Duke of Britayne, sayd Arthur, I shall put to my payne, if I canne, and wyl be there at this Mawdelayn tyde : and than I shal helpe to ayde the damosell, to the best of my

power. Syr, sayde mayster Steuen, than shall ye do well, for ye speake as a gentilman should say.

Than said Brysebar: Swete syr, let vs ii. go togyther to the court, & there ye shall se the noble Kynge of Soroloys & al his barony, the whych is right great and hie: & also ye shall se my lady, the gentyl Florence, who shall retayne you for one of her knightes; and ye shall haue than in your company an hundreth knightes of great valure, wherof I am the symplest and moste insuffycient of them all: and so, by you, shal the company be enforced, and y^e renown of them doubled throughout all the world: and I shall promyse you, aboue al other, to kepe you true and faythfull companye. And whan Arthur herde hym say all this, he smyled a lytel, and sayd: Dere frend, Brisebar, I thank you heartely for your noble profer, and certaynly suche as my pore body cā do, is, and euer shal be, ready to do my lady Florence seruyce; for where so euer I be come, her seruaunt shall I be: but as at this time, to the courte maye I not goo: for fyrst I must fynyshe an enterpryse that I haue taken on me, if God wil giue me the grace to accomplysse it. And than Josseran demaunded of him, what enterpryse it was? As God help me, said Arthur, it is to atcheue the aduētures of the Toure Tenebrous. And whan Brysebar herd that, he said: Syr, for Goddes sake let that enterpryse alone: for certaynlye all the power that my lorde, the Kynge of Soroloys, hath, is not sufficient to attayne to acheue that aduenture: therefore, syr, in my mynd, it were a great folly for you to take suche a thyng in hande as no man can acheue.

Than maister Steuen sayd: Syr Brysebar, let him alone, for he hath a great herte; though it be a greate enterpryse, yet I truste God shall helpe hym: for sythe he hath taken it in hande, I am sure there is none that can let hym of hys mynde. Wel, sayd Brisebar, syth he wyl not be turned, I wil go with him. And so wyl I also, said Josseran. Well, syrs, said Arthur, I thank you: but surely I wyl haue none w^t me, but all onely Bawdewin, my squyer. In the name of God, sayd the mayster, so be it: & ye, syr Brysebar, and I, wyll go together to the court; and ye, syr Markes, & Josseran, Gouvernar, & Jaket, al ye shal abide here

styl, and kepe styl this castell tyl ye haue other worde. Ye saye wel, sayd Arthur. And therewyth they went al togyther to the palays to dyner, and were richely serued: and al that daye they made great feast and ioy, and at nyght wente to theyr restes. And the nexte mornynge, betymes, they arose, and herde masse, the whyche the abbot dyd synge. And, after masse, Arthur mouëd on hys horse, and so dyd the abbot, and mayster Steuen, and Brysebar, and so toke their leue of Gouvernar and other: & so issued out of the castel, and rode together the space of foure leges: & at the last they came to an entrynge into a forrest, where as was a forked waye: and there the mayster and Brysebar toke their leue, and rode forth theyr way on the ryghte hande, the whiche was the next hye way to the citie of Cornite, where as King Emendus was the same season. And y^e abbot went his nexte waye to his dolorous abbey. And Arthur toke his way on the lyfte hande; and so rode forth all the day, tyll it was nere hande nyght; and so aryued at a gētyl squyers place, called the Maner of Plessis: the whych squyer doubted himselfe greatlye, for he had suche enemyes that had mortally defyed hym: therfore he sayd to Arthur: Syr, ye be hither right heartely welcome: but I beseche you in all haste to depart hence shortlye, for the sauynge of youre selfe, for I can not warrant you in my house, for mine enemyes are right myghty, and I loke eche houre whan they shal assayle me. Than sayd Arthur: Syr, care ye not for that, but, and it may please you, I pray you let me haue lodgyng here with you this night: and, syr, I ensure you, if thei come while I am here, I trust I shall make a good peace betwene you and thē, either with fayrenesse or otherwyse. Syr, sayde the squyer, I am content; and God giue you grace to do that ye haue sayd.

CAP. LVI.

HOW THAT ARTHUR SLEW AND DISCOMFYTED XV. KNYGHTES, RIGHTE MIGHTYE AND PUYSSANT, WHO WERE COME TO ASSAYLE HIS HOOST, WHO WAS CALLED THE SQUYER OF PLESSIS.

THUS was Arthur receiued of the squyer, who made hym ryght good chere to hys power: and the same tyme the squyers enemyes had there a spye, who retorned and shewed to thē, how that there was come to the squyers house a straunge knyghte, by semyng ryght myghty and puissaunt; and howe that he had promised to the squier to help hym, if he had any nede that nyghte. Than they al answered, and sayd, how that knyght myght be sure he should se them that same nyght: for they said they wold not let theyr enterprise for one knyght, for they were to the nombre of xv. And whan it was nyght they all apparailled them selfe on horsbacke, and came to the squyers hous all armed, and righte rudely assaulted his hous: and the squier, and suche seruauntes as he hadde, defended them selfe as well as they coude wyth crosbowes, and suche other wepons as they had within. And whan Arthur knewe wel thys, he armed him, and toke his whyte shelde, the whych dyd cast a great clerenesse by nyghte, and toke his good swerde Clarence in his hande. And whan he was thus armed, thā he loked out of a wyndowe, and demaunded of theym wyth out, what they soughte there, and what they woulde? And they answered, how y^t they sought for to haue his head. My head? sayd Arthur; loo! take it here, for here ye maye se it, and I shall brynge it oute shortlye untoo you. Than he desyred them within to leue theyr shotynge and to set open the gate, and to lette downe the brydge; and accordyng to his desyre it was done. And Arthur issued oute all alone, and ran at them: and they all at once ran at hym; and Arthur drewe out Clarence, his good sworde; the whyche, for

his goodnes, was also called traūchfer, that is for to say, cutter of yron, and strake the fyrst so therwyth, that he claue his heade to the eyen; and he made the head flye from the seconde; and from the thyrd he strake of hys arme and sholdre clene from the body; and than the remenaunt layde all at ones on hym, but all they nothyng dyd enpayre hym. And than Arthur dasht furth with his horse, and encountred so one of them, that he ouerthrewe bothe horse and man into a great dyche, the whych was about the place; and there he was drowned. And whan a great mighty knight, who was mayster of them all, and he that fyrst began this warre, sawe his people so hardly delte withall with one knight, he was ryght sorowfull; and therwyth dasht at Arthur, and gaue hym a great stroke on the shelde with a great mace of yren ful of great pryckes of stele; the whyche he layd on with bothe his handes: the whiche stroke rebounded agayne upwarde, for it coude not enpayre his shelde nothyng: and than Arthur lyfte up hys swerde, and strake hym on the head, and the stroke was herde a great way of: but the stroke dyd glyde downe to his lyfte arme; so that arme, and sholdre, and all, flewe clene into the field: and the swerd dasht intoo the arson of his saddell, and claue it clene asonder, and dyd cut asonder the croper of the horse; and therwith horse, and knyght, and al, dasht down to the ground. Than Arthur laid on among the other, bothe on the lyfte syde and on the ryghte syde, and made heades, armes, handes, legges, and fete, flye cleane into the fylde. Than the remnaunte began to flye: but than it was to late, for there was none but eyther he had loste an arme, or a legge. And whā the squier vnderstode how that his gest was thus yssued out al alone, and fyghtyng with hys enemyes, than he armed hym selfe, and ranne oute into the fiede; but there he founde nothyng to doo; for by that tyme Arthur as than had made an ende of them all, and soo was retournyng homeward. And whan the squyer sawe that Arthur had ouercomen al hys enemies, he thought verely that he was of hye prowesse; and so he thanked him moche, and sayde: Syr, ye tolde me trouthe whan ye sayd, y^t ye would make the peas betwene myne aduersaries and me; for nowe I am

amonge them, and yet they saye nothyng to mee. And soo Arthur and the squyer entered into the place, and closed fast the gates after them, & drewe vp the bridge, and so wente to their restes. And in the morning the squier wente out to se whyche of his enemyes were slayne; and amonge the other he founde his principal enemy slayne; wherof he had great ioye, and offred him selfe, therefore, to become Arthurs man, and wold haue gone with hym, but Arthur wold not suffre hym: but so he departed from the squyer: and anone the wordes were spredde abroad in all the countrey, how that a knyght, with a white shielde, had slayne and ouercome xv. knyghtes: the whych wordes came to the hearynge of mayster Steuen and Brysebar. Verely, sayde mayster Steuen, that same is Arthur, who hathe righte great valure in hym. As God helpe me, said Brysebar, it is he. I se well that he is a ryghte valyaunt knyghte, for he is the best in all the worlde. Thus Arthur rode forth tyll it was thre of the clock; and there he foūd, betwene twoo mountaynes, a great vylayne, huge and mightye, blacke and hery out of all measure, and he bare on his sholdre a great croked leuer. And whan he sawe Arthur, he ranne to hym, and toke his horse by the brydel rayne, and demaunded of hym, saying thus: Fayre syr, what maner of man be ye? Frende, sayde Arthur, I am a knyght straunger. Ye, syr, said the vylayne, be ye a knyght? And what seke ye here in these pastures, that I haue in my kepyng? Good felow, sayde Arthur, I go on myne aduenture where as God wil bring me vnto. Why, syr, sayde the vylaine, go ye than to seeke for aduentures? yf ye be so well harted, that ye dare folowe after mee, I shall brynge you vnto a straunge aduenture: but I thynke ye dare not folowe me; for I thynke ye be one of the knyghtes that wyl menace and threaten whan ye stand by the chymney warmyng of you after souper, and in the mornynge all is forgotten. And whan that Bawdwyn herd the vylayne say so to hys mayster, he began to laughe greatly at him, and said: Well, good felowe, leade hym whether so euer thou wyllt, and I warrant him he wyll folowe the. Syr, sayde the vylayne, I speake not to you: as for you, I

se well ynoughe ye be not of that force and myght, that ye can drawe the wyne and drinke it, and pay not for your shot or ye go : I speake to your mayster, therfore let hym answere me, yf that he dare. Frende, sayd Arthur, as for Bawdewin, my squier, is but a fole ; take ye no hede whatsoeuer he sayth, but hardely bring me whether so euer ye wyll, and truely I shall folowe you as longe as my life wyll laste. Ye, but syr, sayd the vylayne, yf ye folowe me, whan it cometh to the nede, than I fere me least ye wyl leue me, and runne away lyke a cowarde. Naye, sayd Arthur, I promyse you faythfully I wyll not forsake you as longe as I may. Well, sayd the vylayne, than come on your waye forthe ; and I promise you, yf there were ten suche as ye be, I shall bryng you thyther where as none of you all shoulde escape from the deth, in lykewise as I haue caused mani a one to do.

Than the vylayne wente furth, and Arthur folowed hym. And at the laste they entred into a great valley, betwene two greate mountaynes, where as they foud a lytel lodge, where as meat and drynk was solde to trauailing men. Than the vylayne sayd to Arthur : Syr knyghte, it is nowe good season that ye gyue youre horse some repast ; for, after this, ye shal fynde no mo houses tyl it be nyghte, at whyche tyme I shall brynge you vnto suche a lodgyng, the whiche shall not be good for you ; for there shall ye lese your lyfe. Than there Arthur alyghted, and gaue hys horse meate, and dyd eate and drynke him selfe. Than the vilayn said : Syr knight, eate and drinke with great joye alwayes : but I ensure you thys shall be the laste that euer ye shall take. And whan Bawdewyn herde that this vilayn thus alwaye manaced his mayster, it greued him right sore, and sayde : A ! thou foule churle, holde thy tonge fro thretenynge thus of my mayster : what ! wenest thou to make him abashed with thy wordes ? Naye, I warrante the, he taketh lytell hede thereto ; for, do the worst thou canst, he defyeth thy malice. Than the vilayn began to roule hys eyen, and to bende his browes, and toke his leuer in both his handes, and wold haue stryken Bawdewyn, but Arthur helde him, and sayd : Frende, take no hede what my squyer

sayeth; for I tell you he is but a fole, therefore speke to me what ye wil, & let hym alone. And whan the good wife of the lodge herde him speake so swetely to the vylayne, and was so loth to dysplease hym, and whan he was vnarmed she saw that he was so goodly a creature, that she loued him in her herte, & praysed hym moche, and demaunded of hym, whether he wente? Arthur answered, and sayde: Good love, I folowe this good felawe. Certaynly, syr, sayd the wyfe, he is no good felawe; but he is the moost foulest and falsest traytoure lyuyng: therfore, gentyll knyght, I haue grete pite of you, and ye are vtterly lost and dede, yf ye go with hym ony ferder; for this foule vylayne dothe nothyng but wathe suche knightes as passeth through this coultre, to thentent to brynge thē thyther where as he is in full purpose to bringe you vnto; for fro thence there was neuer none that euer returned agayne without deth: therfore, gentyll knyght, returne agayne; for it were great losse of suche a knyght as ye seme, to be thus destroyed. Than Bawdewyn said: Syr, howe fele ye your hert? Wyll ye recule backe agayne, or els wyll ye goo forth? Frende, sayd Arthur, how should euer ony lady or damoyzell employe theyr loue on me, yf it should be sayd that I haue fledde away for the menacyng of a foule churlyshe vylayne? Nay, as God helpe me, I had rather suffre deth. Well, syr, sayd Bawdewyn, than ye thynke on loue, I se wel; but, and it touched me as it dooth you, I wolde thynke on no lady, nor on loue in this poynt; for I wolde loue myne owne lyfe better thā to trust on theyr prayse or rewarde. And wyth these wordes the vylayne came to them, and sayd: Syrs, what noise is thys of cowardyse that I here? Syr knyght, I se well your herte fayleth you; for ye are aboute to make couenaunte to retourne agayne: therfore I thynke well ye wyll leue me whan nede is. Frende, sayde Arthur, truly I shall not forsake you. Well, sayd the vylayne, than arme you shortely, and let vs goo hense, for your last dayes draweth faste onwarde truely; therfore make haste.

CAP. LVII.

HOWE THE GREAT VYLAYNE BROUGHT ARTHUR WHERE AS HE FOUGHTE WYTH A GREAT AND A TERRYBLE LYON; BUT FYNALLY ARTHUR SLEWE HIM: AND HOWE, AFTER, HE FOUGHTE WYTH A GREATE GYAUNTESSE AND AN HORRYBLE GYAUNT, AND BY HYS PROWESSE HE CONQUERED THEYM BOTHE; AND, AFTER THAT, FOUGHTE WYTH A GREATE GRYFFON: AND THYS WAS THE BEGYNNYNGE OF THE ADVENTURES OF THE TOURE TENEBROUS, WHEREIN YE SHALL HERE MANYE TERRYBLE AND MARUAYLOUS THYNGES, THE WHYCH WERE ACHEUED BY THE ONELY PROWESSE OF THE VALYAUNTE ARTHUR.

WHAN that Arthur had well repasted hym selfe and hys horse, than he armed hym, and mounted on hys horse, and folowed the sayde vylayne, tyll at the laste they came intoo a great valey, darke and depe. Than sayde the vylayne to Arthur: Syr knyghte, now ryde ye on before and ye dare, and I shal folowe you. So than Arthur rode before; and as they rode, on theyr ryghte hande there were hewers of woode; and as soone as they saw Arthur and the vylaine, than they knewe wel that he was brought thyther by the foule churle; thā they cryed alowde, and sayde: A! gentyll knyght, for Goddes sake retourne againe; for and ye goo any ferther, ye are but deed. A! thou foul vylayne, we praye to God that thou mayest dye an euyl death; for many a noblemā hast thou caused to dye. And whan Bawdewyn herde these wordes, he sayde to hys mayster: Lo! syr, now ye may remembre your loue; ye may heare what these people sayth: certaynlye I woulde not thynke on the fayrest creature of all the worlde in this poynt. And whan Arthur herde Bawdewyn saye so, he laughed at hym, saynge thus: Frende, by the faythe that I owe vnto my lorde, my fader, I can not tell whether I goo, nor what peryll there is therin; but what peryll soo ever I shall fynde, I wolde



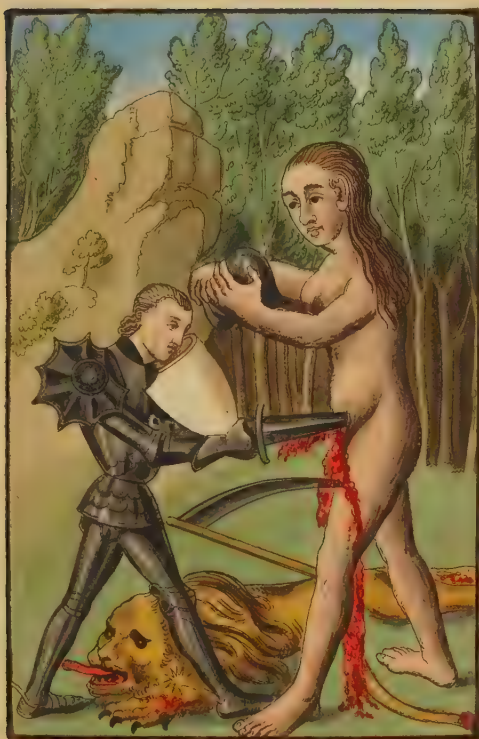


it were double as mouche, on the condicion that I were in certayne that she that I sawe neuer loued me as well as I loue her. And whan the foule vylayne herde hym saye so, in his herte he prayned hym moche, and knewe well therby that he had a valyaunt herte. And thus they rode forth so longe, tyll at the laste the foule churle cryed out, and sayd: Syr knyght, now it wyll appere what ye can doo; for now ye shall haue nede to defende yourselfe. And, with that worde, Arthur loked on his lyfte hande, and sawe where there was comynge to hymwarde a grete and a myghty lyon. Than Arthur fered his horse, lest that the lyon sholde haue slayne hym; therefore he lyghted downe to the grounde, and deliuered his horse vnto Bawdewyn, and dressed hym towarde the lyon. And whan the lyon perceyued hym, he lepte and strake at hym wythe his pawes, thinkinge to confounde him: but Arthur put his shelde before hym, and the lyons stroke dashte theron so sore, that Arthur was all astonyed with the stroke. Than Arthur strake at hym with Clarence, his good swerde, as he passed by hym, and strake of clene his tayle: and whan the lyon felte hymselfe so hurte, he habandoned with all his power his body agaynst Arthur, and with his sharpe tethe he toke Arthur by the helme, and they entred into the bokles of his harneys; but, as God wolde, they touched not his flesshe; and with his fote he strake Arthur such a stroke vpon his shelde, that and it had not been the better shelde, it hadde bene cloven all to peces; and with hys other fote he toke Arthur by the ryghte sholdre: but Arthur swarued from hym, or elles he had bene torne asonder; for in the swaruyng awaye he lost a greate quarter of his harneis; and therewith Arthur lift vp his good swerd and dasht it vp to the harde crosse in at the throte of the lyon; and there wyth the lyon dyd cast out a greate crye and a hydeous, and so fel down to the groūd starke dead: and therewith incontynent he espyed agayne where as there was comyng to hymwarde a greate gyauntesse with a great fawchon in her hande, soo well steled, that there was nothinge but it would cut asonder; and therewith she came vntoo Arthur, and strake at hym right egerly: and whan Arthur sawe the stroke comyng on hym, he quickly

caste his shelde before him. And thys gyautesse was terribly angry for the death of her lyon, wherefore she gaue Arthur such a stroke vpon the sholdre, y^t he was ryght sore astonyed there withal: but, as God wolde, the fawchon brake asondre in two peces, and his shelde was therwith nothings enpayred. And whan the gyautesse saw that her fawchon was broken, she lyft vp a grete spere that she had standynge by her, and thoughte to haue stryken Arthur therwith vpon the head; but Arthur stepte vnder the stroke, and closed wyth her; and than she toke Arthur by the head, and so arasshed clene of his helme so rudely, that she braste asonder al the buckelles wher withal it was tyed; and with the pull that she made, she stepte backwarde with the helme, and than Arthur with his good swerde strake her clene throughtout the bely, and therwith she fell backwarde, for she was soo hasty to revenge her lyon, that she came to Arthur all vnarmed, wher in she was but a fole; for a man may be anone to hasty to come to his enemye: and whan she fell she gaue suche a crye, that all the valey range of the noyse, so that a grete gyaunt, who was her mate, herde it wel; and than he ranne to a grete leuer, and toke it in his hande, and came rennyng so rudely, as thoughe a grete multytude of men hadde come togyder, he mad so grete a noyse: and by that tyme Arthur had stryken of the heed of the giautesse, and rouled it in the middes of the waye, and dyde set agayne his helme vpon his heed. And whan the gyaunte sawe that his wyfe was deed, and his lyon also, he fared lyke a fende of hell, and toke his leuer and dasht at Arthur, thynkyng to haue stryken hym downe to the groude; but Arthur stepte asyde lyghtly, and the stroke lyght on a grete rocke soo rudely, that his handes tynger so sore therwith, that the leuer fel from hym to the groude: and than he stouped downe for to haue taken it vp agayne; and whyle that he was stoupyng downe, Arthur toke Clarence his good swerde, and gaue vnto hym suche a stroke, that one of his boystous armes flewe clene in to the felde. Than the gyaunte lepte forth, and toke Arthur in his other arme, & yf that his whyte shelde had not ben, he hadde ben frussched asonder, for he gaue Arthur a grete stroke with the stubbe of his hurte arme.

Plate 14.

To face page 214.



John Heath del. et sculp.

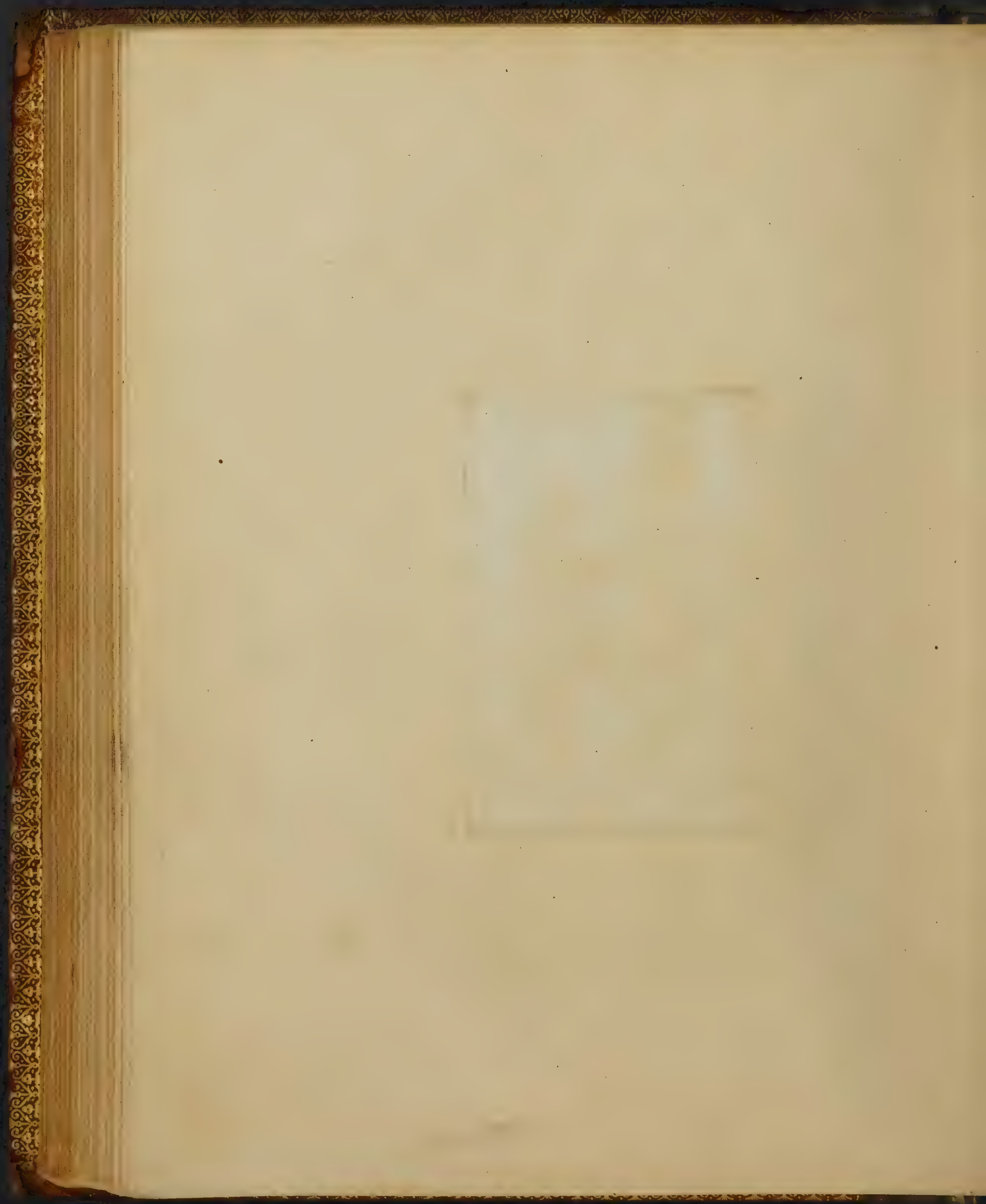


Plate 13.

See face page 214



Our Master's servant



And than Arthur aduysed hym well, and vnder his arme he dasht Clarence his good swerde vp to the harde crosse, and so he fell downe starke dead. Than there came a greate gryffon, and stryuyned Arthurs horse cleane throughout al the body, and thought to haue borne him awaye. And whan that Arthur sawe his horse hurte, in hys heart he was right sorowfull, and strake at the gryffon wyth his swerde, and strake asonder both his legges; and therwith the gryffon flewe away with great payne, and bothe hys legges remained styl vpon the horse; and the horse bledde so fast, that he fel down deade in the place; wherewith Arthur was ryght sore displeased. Than the vylayne came to him, and sayd in thys maner of wyse: Syr knight, in a thyng the whiche can not be remedyed, must nedes be suffered in the best wyse that a man may: your horse is slaine, take ye no care for hym, for there be horses ynough: ye haue slayn the gyaunt and the giauntes, and also theyr lyon, and the gryffon; but, for all that, I promise you that your ende draweth fast onwarde; and, as for thys nyghte, let vs go herborowe vs in the gyauntes house hereby, the whyche is a strong place, and there we shall fynd great plentye of good wyne and meates; and there ye shall se manye fayre and bryghte harneyses; and also there ye shall se heades, armes, legges, and fete of mucche people, the whyche the gyaunte hath taken and broughte to that place alyue, for the gyauntesse woulde neuer, by her wyl, eate none other meate but mannes flesshe. And soo they entred into the place. And the same daye the gyaunt had taken a knyght, and brought hym deade into the place vpon his owne horse, and as than the horse was yet on lyue. And whan the vylayne saw the horse, he toke hym by the brydell, and broughte hym to Arthur, and sayde: Syr knyghte, youre owne horse is deade, therefore I gyue you this horse. I thanke you hertely, good felawe, sayde Arthur. Than Bawdewyn dyd shytt the faste the gate, and there they dydde rest theym all that nyghte. And on the nexte mornynge ensuyng betymes, Arthur rose, and armed hym, and mounted on his horse, that the vylayne had gyuen hym. Than the vylayne came forth, and sayd: Syr

knyght, folow me, for now I wyl go forth. Go on than before, sayd Arthur. And so Arthur rode forth after hym all the longe daye, tyll it was nere nyght; and than at the last they came to a myghtie strong toure, the whiche pertained to a knyght named sir Roger the Scot. Than the vilayne sayd to Arthur: Syr knyght, it is now good tyme to lodge vs here, now in this castel, al thys night; let vs goo entre in to this place: but one thyng I ensure you, the knyghte that oweth this place is the moost shamefullest traytoure that now is lyuynge; for there is none that entreth into this place, but shamefully he dothe murdre them whyle they be in their beddes: he is also cosyn germayne to the Duke of Bygor, & neuewe to syr Fyrmount, who was but nowe of late slayne at the castell of y^e Roch, by a knyght straunger; therefore nowe let se what ye wyl do, whether ye wyl go lodge in this place, or not. Well, sayde Arthur, I se well and I lye wythoute I shall be shrewdly lodged; and sythe thys knyght is of that lignage that ye speke of, he is my mortall enemy: howe be it, as yet I can not complayne on hym, for he dyd me neuer no trespasse; therefore certaynly I wyl go thither to take my lodgyng. And whan the vylayne herd him say so, he thought wel how that he was of great corage, and loued him therefore muche in his herte: howe be it, he sayde vnto hym: Syr, in Goddes name soo be it, let vs go thither; and if anye yll come to you thereby, I am not to blame; I maye not doo wythall, for I haue gyuen you warnynge thereof. Than they entred into the courte of that place. And as sone as syr Roger sawe Arthur, he knew him ryghte well, and was in certayne howe that it was he that had done soo muche prowesse at the castell of the Roche, and had slayne syr Fyrmont, and hadde sore wounded syr Isembarte hys cosyn, and neuewe to the Duke of Bygor; and than his herte began to tremble for great anger, notwithstandinge he made to them great chere outward, and cleped and kissed Arthur, and sayde: Syr, ye be ryghte hertely welcome into my house: as God helpe me, I haue more ioye of your commynge, than of any other manne liuynge: but to hymselfe inwardly he sayde: Yet, or it be mydnight, I will haue that head of yours cleane from your sholders.

Than the vylayne came vnto them, and cryed as loude as euer he could: God kepè the lorde of this place accordynge to his hertes desyre: and these wordes he sayde thre tymes. Than Arthur sayde: Yf hys hearte be good, well haue he, and yf it be other wyse than good, God amende it.

Than Arthur was brought vp into his chaumbre, and there he dyd warme hym. And in the meane tyme, this knyght, syr Roger, came to hys squyer, and demaunded of hym howe and in what maner he myght slea Arthur; for, if we make anye assaulte on hym, he wyl slea vs both; for there is none lyke hym in all the wyde worlde, nor none so soore to be doubted: for he dyd meruaylous dedes of armes at the castell of the Roche. Syr, sayde his squyer, I knowe certaynlye that we can not endure against hym: but I shall tell you what we shall doo: we shall make his bed this night aboue in youre toure, and sette it ouer the trappe doore of the dongeon, and we wyll take away all the bordes in the bottome of the bedde, and in the stede of the bordes sette small staues to sustayne vp the clothes; and soo whan he shall lye downe in the bedde, he and the clothes and all shall tomble downe in to the dongeon, and than we shall soone cast downe his squyer after him, and than slee this foule vylayn; & whan they be in the pytte, we wyll take speres, and so slee them; or elles let vs hete thre or foure cawdrons with hote scaldynge-water, and cast it downe vpon theyr hedes, and so shall we slee them. And whā this syr Roger herde his squyer saye soo, he was ryght well content with hym, & cleped and kyssed hym, and sayd: This mater is ryght well deuysed; for as ye haue sayd, so shall it be done. Therwith the vylayne yssued out of the chaumbre from Arthur, with his grete leuer on his necke; and as soone as he sawe syr Roger counsellynge with his squyer, and other standynge togyder, rownynge in corners, than he began to escrye to them, & sayd: What maner of people be ye, for what mater be ye thus counseyllynge togyder? What! is it for some maryage? Beware y^t there be noo treason amonge you; for, yf there be, I shall frusshe you downe with my leuer. Than Arthur issued out of his chaumbre. And whan syr Roger sawe hym, he toke hym by

the hand, and sayde: Syr, it is time that we wasshe our handes, for your souper is all ready. Syr, as it pleaseth you, sayde Arthur. Than they wasshed and sate them downe at the table, and were righte well serued: and the vylayne was set downe at an other table, behynde Arthur; and so they gaue hym parte of al their meates and drynkes that they hadde, and he dyde ete and drynke excedyngly moche, for they could not satysfye hys apetyde. And after souper, Bawdewyn, Arthurs squyer, toke hede to his horses. And than Arthurs bedde was made in the same place where as it was deuysed before. And the vyllayne layde hym downe on foure quysshens by the fyre in the hall, as he that hadde wel eaten and dronken, and so fel fast on slepe, & snorted ryght sore: wherfore, syr Rôger, that was knyghte of the place, would haue wakened him; but Arthur would not suffre him, but caused hym to be couered with a grene couerlet, and so let hym lye. And whā it was time for hym to go to his bedde, than the torches were lyghted vp, and the knyght cōuayed Arthur to his chaumbre; and at hys taking leue of Arthur, he offered w^t hys mouthe hym selfe, and all his householde, to be redy at his cōmaundemente: but in his herte inwardly, he thought to be redy to cause hym to lose his lyfe. And whan he was departed, Arthur wente to his bedde; and as he layd hym downe, he and the bed and all fell into the great pytte: and the knyght and hys seruantes were readye watchyng at the doore. And whan they heard the russhe, they entred into the chaumbre, and toke Bawdewyn and dyd caste hym downe too hys mayster; and Arthur receyued hym in hys armes, because he should not be hurt in the fallynge downe. Than there rose a greate crye and noyse throughoute all the place; and some bare speres and barres of yron, to caste downe at Arthur, to slee him in the pyt; & euer Arthur watched well their strokes, and dyd auoÿde them as well as he myghte. And at the laste, by the reason of the great noyse, the vylayne arose oute of hys slepe. And so whan that he hearde that great brute, he wyst well that Arthur was betrayed. Than he mounted vp into the chaumbre, with his greate leuer in his handes, and there he saw wel that they

were aboute to enforce them selfe to slea Arthur. Than he toke his leuer, and strake so the knyght, syr Roger, in y^e necke, that he caused his tonge to hange out of his mouth nye half a fote; and therwith he fel down into the pyt to Arthur. And the vylayne than sayd to Arthur, Syr knyght, gnawe well on that morsell, ye shall haue more anone. Than he lyft vp his leuer agayne, and strake syr Rogers squyer suche a stroke on y^e hed, y^t his head was frussed harde to his shulders, & he fell also down into the pyt after hys mayster. Than the vylayne sayd to Bawdewyn, Good squier, cut hys throte, and make him sure. In the name of God, sayde Arthur, it shal not nede, for he hath ynoughe alreadye. Than the vylayn dressed him at the rēnaunte that held torches in theyr handes to gyue lighte, and dasht theym downe one after another: and some fled awaye, and he folowed after, and slew them all. Than he entred into the kechyn, & there he found the coke boylyng of a gret caudron full of water, the which should haue ben cast down on Arthur: thā he toke the coke in his armes, and did caste hym into the cawdron all boyl-ynge, and dyd hold him downe with his leuer, & sayd: Thou shalt sethe without salte, tyl thou be ynough; and if thy flesshe be harde soden, I shall broyle the on the coles. Than he ran to a ladder, and bare it to Arthur in the pyt. Thā Arthur and Bawdwin issued out: and as soone as Arthur was without, he ran to his swerde, & demaunded if there were any more to do in that place? As God helpe me, syr, sayd the vylayne, I trowe not. Than they light vp torches and descended downe, and found an olde house ful of deade mennes bones; such as the traytours of that place had slayne. In the name of God, sayd Arthur to the vylayne, ye haue holpen me nowe lyke a frende, for al your vncurteis wordes here before. Wel, sayd the vylayne, I wyl that if ye can scape to morow from that aduentur whether as I shal bring you, the whyche I thynke you can not do, that than ye shall promyse me to do for me a thyng, suche as I shall desyre you. Frende, sayd Arthur, and I promise you, that to the vttermost of my power I shal do any thing that ye desire me, yf a knight may do it wythout reproche of vylany. Well, sayd

the vylayne, I beleue that all this promise shall not nede; for though ye were in a maner made of yrō, yet I thinke ye shuld not scape fro death: but as for this nighte I shall kepe you fro any daunger. And so he made Arthur a fayre bedde, and lay all nyghte in the flore by him: & so he was that night his chamberlaine; and so he was euer after, all his lyfe, for, afterwarde, Arthur dyd muche good to him. So thus they went to bedde, and toke theyr reste tyll the nexte mornynge that Arthur rose.

CAP. LVIII.

HOWE ON THE NEXT MORNYNGE THE VYLAINNE BROUGHT ARTHUR TO ANOTHER ADVENTURE, NYE TO THE TOURE TENEBROUS: WHERE AS HE WAS FIRSTE ASSAILED WYTH TERRIBLE MONSTROUS BYRDES, AND GREATE GRIFFONS WITHOUT NOMBRE: & AFTER Y^t HE WAS ASSAILED WITH XXIIII. KNIGHTES; AND HOW HE BI HIS PROWES SLEW THEM ALL. AND ALSO HE BETTE DOWN THE GRET MAHOMET OF BRASSE, OUT OF THE WHYCHE THERE ISSUED OUTE A WYND, THAT IT TOURNED ABOUT GREAT MYLLSTONES LYKE POWDER: AND ALSO HOW THAT HE ENTRED INTO THE CASTELL TENEBROUS, AND QUENCHED THE FYRE WHICH WAS THE CAUSE OF THE GREAT DARKENES, THE WHICH CONTEYNED THE CIRCUITE OF V. LEGES COMPASSE, AS YE SHAL HERE AFTERWARD.

IN y^e next morning betimes, Arthur rose and armed him, & mouēd on his horse, and toke his wai, euer folowing y^e vilayn: & so he rode forth tyl it was about thre of the clock; & than they entred into a great valey, and euer they rode lower and lower: it was than a fayre seasō, for the sonne shone clere: & by that tyme they had ryden twoo leges and a halfe, they were in

so much darknes, that they had clene lost the sight both of the sonne, and also of the day; for it was there as dark as though it had be aboute midnyght. Than the vilayne sayd to Arthur: Syr knight, can ye tel fro whens al thys darknes cometh? If ye can fordo it & make it clere, than shal ye get thereby a perpetual honour: & know you for certayn, that as yet there was neuer none that euer entred any ferder that euer retourned agayne; therefore if youre hert fayle you, enter no ferder; for, if ye do, ye shall dye as other haue done here before. Frende, sayd Arthur, howe is it that all this darkenes is here in thys place? I wyl tell you no more, sayd the vylayne, but I rede you be sage & wise, for it standeth you wel in hand. And therewith Arthur departed fro them and entred into the derkenes, and the vylayn & Bawdewyn abode styll at the beginninge of the derkenes; & so they lost the syght of Arthur, but they myght se the shynynge of his sheld as farre of as one myght shote an arowe. Thus he rode forth well the space of halfe a lege; & at the last he found a ryuer, great and depe, & black as pitch, and the bankes were so hye, that vnneth the water mighte be sene runnyng vnderneath; and it was so full of serpentes and lizards, that none could entre amonge them without he were slayne: and aboue his head flewe monstrous birdes, and diuers griffons, who wer able to beare away an armed knyght, hors & al; and that they were in as great a multitude as though thei had ben starlings. And Arthur dydde couer his head with his sheld; and the griffons dasht therat with their talentes, & anoyed bothe Arthur and his horse righte sore. And euer Arthur florysshed about hym wyth hys good sword Clarence, & what so euer he touched dyd hym no more hurt after.

Also there were flies that were as great as nuttes and as blacke as pytche, and they stange both hym & his horse ryghte sore, so that the bloud yssued out after: but & it had not bene for the clerenes of his shelde, he had bene slayne there and he had had a M. mens liues; but by the bryght shynynge therof he mighte well se rounde aboute hym, and perceyue well whan any of these thinges came to himwarde; wherby he made as good defence as was for him possible. And thus he rode a longe season

by the ryuer syde; & at the last he found a lytel strayte way, the which he must nedes passe, without he would haue tourned agayne: and at the last Arthur dasht into the strayte way, & anon the vermin that was there ran to his hors; so that shortly he was ful of them as though they had bene flies: and they souked so muche bloud of the hors, that he began to wax very feble. And whā Arthur sawe that his horse would fayle him, he hasted as fast as he might to get oute of that strayte waye; and so wyth moche payn he gate his hors out therof: and incontinent the horse fel down dead. Thā Arthur set his fete to y^e erth as well as he might. And thā there came a knyght at Arthur or he was ware, & hit him on his shelde, the whiche he helde not fast in hys hande; therfore the stroke dyd glent, and the spere helde & brake not. And as the knyght passed forth, Arthur toke hym by the rayne of the brydell, and caught hym by the arme & pulled hym so rudely, that he made him auoyde his horse: and soo he fell downe into the water and there was drowned, & deuoured with the foule vermyn that was therin. Than Arthur lepte on the same knyghtes horse, and toke his spere. Than an other knyght cryed, and sayd: Syr knyght, beware of me. Than Arthur tourned & encoūtrede hym: and the knyght brake his spere; but Arthur strake hym so rudely, y^t his spere went clene throughtout hys body; and so he fell downe deed. Than there ran at hym x. other knyghtes al at ones; and they strake him on al sydes with great and myghty strokes: thā he toke his good swerde and strake one of them soo rudely, that he claue hym clene to the sholdres; and an other he claue from the sholders downe to the backe bone: and delte amonge them such strokes, that he confounded all that he attayned vnto. And by that tyme he hadde great nede of such herbes as mayster Steuen gaue hym: and also his whyte shelde and good swerde dyd hym there good seruyce; for suche knyghtes as he hadde slayne were chosen mē, & ryght puyssaūt, but Arthurs chyualrye surmounted all other; for there he dydde so muche wyth his handes, that he slewe all y^t euer were agaynst hym. Than he rusht forth with his horse, and wyst not whether, til at the last he hearde the gryndynge togyther of two milstones,





one vpon another, as they do in a myll; wherby all the earth about Arthur did shake: and the cause why that these stones went thus aboute was, for there stode by them a great fat of brasse, wherin there was a great mahomet syttyng vpon a barre of yren made by enchauntement; who blewe from hym soo greate a wynde, that these stones turned therby so swyfly, that no creature could passe by them wythout death. Than Arthur approched to these mylstones: but than he felte so terryble a wynde, that he was fayne to alyght downe of his horse, and wente on fote as well as he myght; but he sawe wel that he coude not come nere these stones without he should dye, therfore he went rounde aboute them to se what wayes he myght come to them: and at last he founde a lytle brydge, whiche was so narowe, y^t one man could not passe by another: and vnder thys brydge there was so great a pyt, that the botom therof could not be perceyued; and there were also xii. knyghtes that kepte thys brydge; vi. at the one ende, and vi. at the other, all armed w^t crosbowes & hatches, and maces of stele in theyr handes. And whā the vi. fyrst knyghtes sawe Arthur, they ran at hym all at ones, & gaue hym many great strokes on hys shelde, but neuer they could enpayre it. Than he toke his good swerd, and strake so the fyrst, y^t he claue his heed asonder; & fro the seconde he stroke of his arme clene w^t the sholdre; & fro the thyrde he beraue his head: and whan y^t other thre sawe how theyr felowes were slayne, & how that nothinge coulde endure ayenst hym, they fledde towarde the bridge; but Arthur ouertoke so the hyndermost, that hys brayne flewe clene into the felde; and the seconde for haste lepte into the pyt, and there brake his necke; and the thyrde he ouertoke on the brydge, and toke hym in hys armes, & dyd cast hym ouer the brydge downe into the pyt, and there he dyed myserablye: therwyth he hasted hym ouer the brydge; and than the other vi. ranne all at ones at hym, and thought to haue dasht him downe into the pyt; but Arthur, lyke a valiaunt knight, lept in amonge them, & layde on with his swerde rounde aboute hym in suche wyse, that within a shorte space he departed life and death asonder of v. of theym; and than the syxt kneled downe before Arthur, & besought

him of mercye, and prayed him, for Goddes sake, that he would not sle hym. Take no fere, sayde Arthur, for thy lyfe is saued, soo y^t thou wylt tell me fro whence this grete wynde cometh. Syr, sayde he, it cometh out of yonder great vessell of brasse that ye may se yonder: for therein is a mahomet made all of lether, syttyng on a gret barre of yron, made by the crafte of enchaunte-mente: but who soo coulde ouertourne this mahomet, the wynd shold than cease. Well, sayde Arthur, abyde me here styll, & I wyl go se what I can do.

CAP. LIX.

HOW ARTHUR BETTE DOWN THE GRETE MAHOMET SYTTYNGE IN THE VESSELL OF BRASSE, AND THEREBYE THE WYNDE WAS CEASED.

THAN Arthur wente forth, & thought to haue gone boldly to this vessell of brasse; but y^e wynd was so byg, that he was fayne to lie on y^e erth all alonge, & so to crepe on handes & fete tyll he came to the vessell, & drewe after hym his shielde, his swerd, and a longe spere, & dasht therwith the mahomet so rudely with so many strokes, that at y^e last this foule mahomet ouerthrew vp so down in the vessell, & incontinent the enchauntment ceased, & the stones stode all styll, for than there was no maner of wynd.

Than Arthur stode vp on his fete, and came agayn to the knight, & demaunded of hym what towre it was y^t he sawe stande before him in the derke: for all this season he had no lyght, but by the reason of the shyning of his sheld. Thā the knyght answered, and sayd: Sir, the Duke of Bygor hath a neuew who is named syr Isembart: he is lorde of this place: and he hath suche enuy to all people, that he caused this tour to be made by a subtyll enchaunter, & all this grete darknes which ye haue bene in, the

whiche endureth v. leges in circuite, in the which compas there was no land ayred nor sowed the space of syxe yeres paste: and so all suche people as were wont to dwell therin, are fledde away and famished for hongre: and this enchaunter, by his craft, also made this riuer y^t ye haue passed, the which neuer man dyd before thys tyme, withoute death: for euer thys darknes hath continually endured, sauynge one day in the yere, and that is on new yeres day, the whyche daye the vi. knightes that ye haue slayne, the which were of the best knightes that coulde be found in all this lande, (how be it, nowe they haue found their mayster) the whiche knightes dyd prouyde for vs y^e sayd day, for all thynges as was nedefull for vs to haue: & I and al my company, who wer in al the numbre of xii. persons, we kept alway this passage betwene these mylstones, the whyche turned euer without rest, sauynge on Saynt Martyns daye, and than we might passe out to the foresayd vi. knightes, and fetch in all such thynges as was prouided for vs al the hole yere. And so this toure was beset round about, what with knyghtes, and with these milstones, and with wynd, and w^t darkenes, so that it were, in a maner, impossible to entre into this toure w^toute death. Well, sayde Arthur, shewe vnto me what is the cause, and from whence cometh al this darknes. Syr, sayd he, it cometh out of a greate pitte that is in this toure: and there be greate gryffons that descendeth downe into thys pyt, and in the bottome therof there is a great hideous fyre, made so by crafte, that no man can tell how: out of the whych there ryseth so blacke and so thicke a fume and smoke, the whych ryseth out of this pit by certayne dores and wyndowes, wherby the light of the son and of the brighte skye is so quenched, that it is euer continually darke, the which derknes containeth the circuite of v. leges compasse, as I haue shewed you before: wherfore all this country is clene wasted & destroyed, and all the people fledde out therof. And why, sayd Arthur, did he all this cruelte? Certaynly, said the knight, I shal shewe to you: It is of trouth, that here by there is an abbey of white monkes, who were wont to be reputed ryghte noble, and of great possessyons: & most comonly kynges or prynces, whan they paste by that place,

they would there rest and herbour them, and there they should be well serued: and it was named the Abbey of the Grace Dieu. And the abbot is a right wise man and a noble, for he is brother vnto the lorde of Argenton, who was falslye slayne, by treason, by this dukes neuw; the whych fortunēd to come to the sayde abbey vpon an Ester day in the fore none, in the same seasō that the abbot and al his hole cōuent were in solemne processyon: and because that the cōuent did not, at his fyrst comyng, leue the seruyce of God that they were in, to haue layde the tables, & to haue brought him meate and drynke to haue fylled his paunche: therfore he was so displesed, that incontynent he lepte on his horse, and so was departyng, and his false enchaüter with hym. And whan the abbot knewe that, as soone as he myghte, he came to hym, and desyred him to tarye: but in no wyse he could make hym to chaunge his purpose: but in the most shamefullest wyse that he could, he rebuked them, and called them foule rotten churles; promysynge to do them as greate dyspleasure as could lye in hys power to doo. So he hath done, as ye may se, for he hath caused them euer syth to lyue in great darknes: and also he hath taken from theym all theyr rentes and possessyons, which they helde vnder hym, or in his rule, in al the londe of Argenton: for, in al that cyrcuyte, labourers coulde not laboure for theyr lyuyng for lacke of lyghte, wherefore many of them be famished for hunger; and, to saye the trouth, in thys sayde abbey the seruyce of God hath not bē minystred this fyue yere. Well, sayd Arthur, that is greate damage: but, I praye the, tell me howe may this darkenes be fordone? Syr, sayd the knyght, the enchaunter, whan he made this fyre, was ryghte sore dysplesed, because that there sprang oute of the earthe, euen by this terryble fyre, a fayre fountayne: wherby he right well knew that this fyre should be quenched, if anye knyghte myghte attayne to come therto, and to cast the water therof into the fyre, and so than al the darknes should cease for euermore after.

CAP. LX.

HOW THAT ARTHUR ENTRED INTO THE TOURE TENEBROUS, AND
HOW HE THERE QUENCHED THE FYRE, WHEREBY ALL THE TER-
RYBLE ENCHAUNTEMENTS CEASED.

THAN Arthur sayd : Frend, brynge me to this sayd toure. Than he wente on before, & Arthur folowed hym : & so wente fast by the greate wyndowes and dores of the toure, the which were of xvi. speres length square ; out of the whyche there yssued soo great haboundaunce of fume, that his bryght shelde lost clene his shynyng : wherefore he was sore troubled, for than he could se no maner of thyng : how be it, they dyd so muche by gropyng, that at the laste they came juste to the toure ; and there they founde the walles pyght ful of sharpe barres of yren, set as thicke as the prickes of an vrchins skyn, of the length of halfe a spere, to then- tent that no creature should approche nere to the walles : so there was none entre but at a lytle wycket, and with moche payne the knyght dyd open it. And whan that it was opened, there yssued out so greate haboundaunce of smoke, that the derkenes therby was doubled throughout all the countree ; so that neyther candell nor torche coulde brenne in no place : neuerthelesse, Arthur entred in at the wycket, and left the knyght wythout : the smoke and hete was ryght greuous to hym ; for yf there had not ben more valure in hym than in ony other, he had bene there clene ouercome. And alwayes he went downwarde on the stayres, and sawe nothyng ; but he felt so manye greate strokes, that oftentimes thereby he was constrayned to knele on hys knees ; but he coulde not tell from whens they came, or who dydde gyue them to hym : and euer he flourysshed aboute wyth his swerd, but it auayled hym nothyng, for he strake he wist not wherat ; and so fynally he was fayne to couer his head wyth hys shelde, for or elles he had ben frusshed thoughe he had ben of yren : and alwayes thus he wente euer downwarde on the stayres, tyll at the laste he came downe to the

botom : & there he founde a fayre greate fawte, and there he felt so great hete, that he swette so therby, that he was nye ouercome : and as he felte aboute hym, he perceyued that he was nye the fyre ; and as he went ferder, he founde out the fountayne by the reason of the colde ayre y^t he felte, wherof he was ryght gladde ; and soo than he toke his shelde & plunged it into the water, and bare as muche water therin as he coulde, and dyd caste it into the fyre ; and euer he fetched more water, and continually dyde caste it into the fyre : and euer as the fyre quenched the darkenes began to mynysshe ; and the more water he dydde caste into the fyre, the clerer the lyght began to waxe : and at the conclusion he dydde caste soo muche water, that the fyre was clene quenched : than myght he se clerely all aboute hym. Than he perceyued on bothe the sydes of the stayres, how there stode greate ymages of brasse holdyng in theyr handes greate maces of stele, the whyche had doone hym moche trouble as he wente downewarde, but than theyr power was ended, for whan the fyre was quenched, the enchauntement was fynysshed. Than Arthur, whā he sawe that all was done, he retourned vp agayne the stayres, and was ryghte wery of hys trauayle, what for hete and swetyng, and the greate strokes that he had receyued : and so came agayne to the lytle wycket, where as the knyghte was styll abydyng. And whan he sawe Arthur hole and sounde, and on lyue, he kneled downe before hym, and sayd : Syr, ye be welcome as he that is chefe floure of all chynalry of the worlde. Than Arthur set hym downe vpon the grene grasse to take his brethe, and did of his helme and shelde.

So thus all the countre was clene delyuered fro darkenes, soo that euery bodye myght se clerely aboute theym ; wherof the abbot and all hys cōuent had great joye : and so they went all and rendered thanks to Almyghty God in theyr church. And than the abbot sayd to all his bretherne : Syrs, let vs go and se hym that hath thus delyuered vs fro all thralldome, yf God wyll gyue vs the grace to fynde hym, for verely I thynke it be the gentyl knyght y^t was at the Porte Noyre.

Than the abbot and al his cōuent yssued out of the abbey wyth comyn processyon, and so came to this sayd toure, the whyche was

not ferre thens: and there they founde Arthur syttyng on the grounde, and the knyght by hym. And whan Arthur sawe them, he toke to hym hys shelde and helme, and hys spere in hys hande. And whan the cōuent wyth the processyō came before hym, he kneled downe before the crosse, and all the cōuente kneled downe before hym, nor they woulde not aryse tyll he was vpon his fete. And than there came to them Bawdewyn, & wyth hym the foule greate vylayne who hadde broughte Arthur to all these forsayd aduentures. And whan Bawdewyn sawe the procession and all those monkes, than he thought veryly that Arthur had bene dead: than he began to cry and to braye, and to make all the sorow of the world, and sayd: Alas! vnhappy creature as I am, that thus haue lost my lord and mayster, the floure of all the worlde in all noble chyualry! Alas! death, why doost thou not take me? And thus, as he made thys great sorow, at the last he espyed Arthur wher as he stode; than hys heart came to hym agayne. And the abbot came to Arthur, and sayd: Ryght noble and vertuous knight! ye be ryght hertely welcome, as he that hath delyuered vs, and all thys countre, out of suche tourmente and pryson as we were in a longe space: and, by the pleasure of God, by your meanes the seruyce of God from hens forth shall be mynystred in our churche. Syr, I and all my hole cōuent hartely desyre you to come and take your rest wythin oure abbey, now after your great trauayle. And Arthur with a ryght good wyll dyd graūt them, for he was very wery. Than Bawdewyn toke his shelde, and the great vylayn toke hys spere and helme, and often tymes sayd vnto hym: Gentyll knyghte, God gyue the joye, and encrease thyn honour and bounte; for thou haste acheued that neuer man could do before thys tyme: therefore nowe, by the pleasure of God, and by thy hye prowesse, the fayre damoyzell of Argenton shall be delyuered oute of trouble and care, and oute of the handes of the Duke of Bygors neuewe; for thou haste promysed me to goo where so euer that I shall brynge the, therefore I now desyre the for to kepe thy promyse. Well, sayde Arthur, I ensure you faythfully that I wyll not breake my promyse. Sir, said the abbot, God gyue you the grace to brynge this lady out of thral-

dome : for I knowe well ye haue prowesse suffycient to acheue that enterpryse, thoughe it were a greater mater. That is of trouth, sayd the vylayne, for it hath ben right well proued ; for I haue broughte hym by all the places where as ony harde aduenture hath ben, to proue therby his chyualry and noble vertue : how be it, the dukes neuewe is greatly to be redoubted ; but, for all that, I doubte not but that he shall be well chastysed : and soo therwyth they wente all to the abbey, where as the abbot made theym ryght great honoure and chere ; and therefore all the belles in the church were ronge continually thre dayes and thre nightes for greate ioye. And so, for a lytell space, Arthur, & Bawdwyn, and the great vylaine, sported them there in the great feast of ioy.

Now, for a tyme, let vs leue Arthur in this abbey, & let vs speke of the mighty Kyng Emendus, and of the faire Florence, his daughter.

CAP. LXI.

HOW AFTER THAT BRISEBAR & MAYSTER STEUEN WER DEPARTED FRO ARTHUR FRO Y^e PORTE NOYRE, THEY ARYUED AT CORNITE, WHERE AS KING EMENDUS WAS, AND IN HIS COMPANY THE EMPEROURE OF YNDE, AND HIS OTHER FOURE KNYGHTES, HOLDYNGE THE SAME TIME A GREAT SUMPTUOUS OPEN COURT : AND THERE MAYSTER STEUEN & BRYSEBAR RECOUNTED TO THEM AL, IN OPEN AUDYENCE, THE NOBLE CHYUALRY OF ARTHUR : AND THIS SAME MEANE SEASON THERE CAME INTO THE COURTE A KNIGHT ALL ARMED, AND BROUGHTE TYDYNGES TO THE KYNGE, HOWE ALL THE ADVENTURES OF THE TOURE TENEBROUS WERE ACHEUED BY THE ONELY PROWES OF ONE NOBLE KNYGHT.

WHAN that the mighty Kyng Emendus hadde holden a gret solemne court at a fest of Ester, in a gret citie of his called Sabary, the xv. daye of Ester the emperour would haue departed, but the

kyng would not suffre him, but entreted hym so fayre, that he was content to abyde: and soo they were determyned to kepe theyr Whytsontyde at Cornyte, and so they dyd: at which time the kyng kepte the moost sumptuous and open courte that he kepte syth he was kyng. Soo thus the emperoure abode styl wyth the kyng tyl to the time it was Whytsontyde; against the which tyme the kyng had sente for all the nobles of hys realme, to be at the sayd feast at his citie of Cornite. And so whan the daye approached, the kyng wyth all hys noble company rode to Cornite: & there mette with him his noble doughter, the gentyll Florence, accompanied with y^e Archebyssshop of Cornite, her vncl, and brother vnto the kyng, her father: and so this citie was than rially replenished with kynges and knightes. And whan the kyng was entred, he alighted downe at the peryon, and soo mounted vp into the palays: and the nexte day the emperoure came thither, and the kyng, and Florence, his doughter; and all hys hole barony dyd encountre and conuey hym to his lodgyng, the whych was in the Abbey of Saynt Quintine: and than the kyng & Florence retourned agayne vnto theyr palays. And the thyrde daye before the feast there came to the courte the Kyng of Orqueney, and the noble Kyng of Mormall, and the Kyng of Valefoude, and the Kyng of Sabary; also thither came the lord Neuelon, senesshal vnto the fayre Florence, and syr Ancell, his neuewe, and the lorde Poole, syr Steuen, and syr Miles of Valefoude, lord of Damas, and syr Artaude, lorde of Arsace, & syr Moraūt, lorde of Fenisse, and syr Olyuer, lorde of Sabary; and also there was syr Victor, lorde of Amason, and syr Moslin the Scot, and syr Sanxton of Ostelin. And all these were of the retinue of the noble Florence; and there were so many other, that a greate parte of theym were fayne to be lodged wythoute the cytye.

Than the court was so full and so plēteous, that there was neuer seene none suche before. Than the kyng caused to be cried, that whosoeuer would take on hym the noble ordre of knyghthode, that he shoulde be dubbed knyghte with hys own handes. The nexte daye, the whych was the fyrst day of the feast, than there began in the courte soo muche feast and joye, that there was neuer

sene no such in all the courte before : and on Whytsondaye, after masse, the kynge made in hys palays fyfty newe knyghtes, vnto whome he dydde gyue armes, and horse, and harneys. And Florence dyd gyue them gownes of skarlet, and mantelles of grene, furred wyth ermynes : and soo all these new knyghtes were standynge before the kinge, who dyd gyrde aboute them theyr swerdes, and ryghte swetely laughyng dyd giue them the neck stroke of knyghthode : and Florence dydde lace theyr mantelles about theyr neckes.

And the emperour dyd make in his lodgyng xl. knyghtes. And the other foure kinges eche of them made xxx. knyghtes. And so than the emperour and the other kynges dyd mounte on horsebacke, and all these new knyghtes wyth them, and soo came to the palays : and than began hornes and bussynnes to blowe, and taboures, and rebeckes, & other instrumētes to sowne, and to make the moost melody of the world. And than there assembled together al the juglers & tombleres, and al resorted to the palays. And whan they were all assembled at the courte, there were to the nombre of two hundred & x. newe knyghtes. And so the kynge and the emperour sate downe, and the fayre Florence betwene them : and al the other kinges were set eche of them after their degre. And the iuglers and mynstrelles began to make ioye and feast ; ladyes and damoysselles began to daunce ; lordes and knyghtes dyd juste and tournay ; trompettes, and clarions, and other instrumentes of musyke, began to sown ; and all the cyte was hanged with cloth of golde & ryche arays. And as they were in this great myrth & joy, there alyghted, at the peryon, syr Brysebar, and mayster Steuen was remaynyng at the castell Reynarte, but two leges thens : & there he made the peas betwene the burgeyses of the towne and the meane people, for they had ben before longe at discorde. And whan syr Brisebar was mouēd vpon the palays, all the barons and knyghtes ran & welcomed hym, & made for hys comyng great joye & feest, & specyally syr Neuelon, the seneschall, & syr Ancell, & syr Myles of Valifounde, & all other, made hym suche chere, y^t, for prese, he had greate payne to come to the kyng : & as soone as the kynge sawe hym, he made great joy,

and toke hym by the hande, & caused hym to syt downe before hym. Than was al the courte ryght joyfull of hys comyng, for before there were none lacking of al Florence knyghtes, but he & Arthur. Than the kynge sayd : Syr Brisebar, ye sent hyther to me the heed of the foule great mōster, the whyche is slayne, thanked be God ! but I pray you tell me how he was conquered ? Syr, sayd Brysebar, your grace sent me thyther wyth a great company : how be it, we dyd nothyng there : for we founde there fyghtyng wyth the monster, the moost gentyl knyght y^e now lyueth, and moost freest of herte, moost curteyse, swete, and amyable, & the moost valyaūt & redoubted knyght that euer was gyrt wyth swerd : for he all only stroke of the monsters heed in my syghte, & dyd there suche prowessse of armes, that no manne can do like him. In the name of God, quod the kynge, it is great valure in one man to bryng to deth suche a foule beest. Syr, sayd Brysebar, ye can not know the valure and hie prowessse whiche is in thys knyght : for it is he that, all onely, hath acheued the straunge aduentures of the Porte Noyre ; and it is he that wyth his body dyd maruayles at the Roche, where as syr Fyrmont with v. hondred mo dyd laye in a wayte for hym : and there he lepte into a shyppe full of hys enemyes, whan he perceyued that I and other of my company were taken prysoners, and so ledde forth to the castell : and there he sustayned, all onely, the medlynge amonge all his enemyes, the whyche was all y^e comynalte of the towne of the Roche, and of the countre all aboute : and there he slewe syr Fyrmont, and more than three hondred of hys companye, and rescowed vs out of pryson : and also he rescowed the knyght of Plessis of all hys enemyes. What wyll ye that I shall saye ? He is the floure of all chyualry ! there is not his pere in all the worlde !

And he hadde scant vttered these wordes, but that there came into the palays a knyght all armed, and dressed hym to the kynge, and sayde : Ryght hie and myghty puyssaūt kynge ! I haue brought vnto you good and true tydynges ; that is, how that the straunge aduentures of the Tenebrous Toure are acheued, and all the enchauntementes clene fordene, and the greate darkenes is now tourned to lyght and bryghtnes, & all the knyghtes that kepte the

toure are all slayne, and the great lion, and gyaunt, and gyaunt-esse, are slayne, and the countre deliuered fro al the harde aduentures that they had longe endured. Fayre frend, sayd the kynge, and who hathe done all thys dede? Syr, that hath done a knyght al onely, who wereth a whyte shelde: and, for a certayne, I sawe hym vnarmed in the Abbey of Grace Dieu; but neuer, syth God was borne, hath there bene seen soo fayre a creature, so gentyll, nor so gracyous.

And whan Florence herde spekyng of the whyte shelde, she thought than veryly y^t it was her shelde, the whiche was in her paulyon at the Porte Noyre, and thought veryly that it was her frende & loue, Arthur, that bare it, of whome she herde so muche good reported: and thus wyth her owne thought her herte trëbled, and sodenly therby she blusshed (how be it, she made no semblaūt,) & to her selfe she sayd: A! swete frende, noble and true hert, whan shall I se you, so that I may speke wyth you at good leyser?

Than the king sayd: In the name of God, thys knyght is right valyaūt! What is the cause, syr Brisebar, that ye brought him not to y^e court wyth you, to thentent that we myght be acquaynted wyth hym, so that he myght be our frende, and we hys? As God helpe me, sayde the Kynge of Orqueney, it were a greate rychesse to haue suche a shelde as he is nere vs: and veryly, as for my parte, I had rather haue the companye of hym, than of the rychest persone nowe lyuyng; and, syr Brysebar, ye dyd ryght yll youre deuoyre, whan ye dyd not your payne to bringe him to this courte. Syr, sayd Brysebar, by the fayth that I owe vnto my lorde, the kynge, I dyd the beste of my power to haue brought hym hyther; but he answered me, y^t he must nedes go fyrst to the Toure Tenebrous, and sayd: if God did gyue hym the grace there to escape that aduēture, he wold be at this Mawdelayn tyde at Argence, to make battayle ayenst syr Isembarte, y^e Duke of Bygors neuwe, for the fayre mayden of Argentons sake: for he shewed me, how y^t he had promysed to her vncle, the Markes, & to mayster Steuen, that he wolde do the best of hys power to get agayne the fayre ladyes herytage: & how that he wolde shewe vnto the dukes neuwe, that falsly and vntruly he had dyssheryted her, & by false treason

slayne the lorde of Argenton, her father. It is of trouth, sayd the knight that brought thyther the tydynges fro the Tenebrous Toure, I waraunt hym he shall ryght well helpe that lady in her ryght. But, by the fayth y^t I owe vnto God, sayd the Kyng of Orqueney, yf suche a batayle shall be there, yf God wyll, it shall not be wythout me: for veryly I wyll be ther at the same tyme. Syr, sayd Phylp of Orqueney, fayre vncle, suffre me to go with you, for truly so wyll I do. And I also, quod syr Nephelō. And I wyl not be behynd, sayd Brisebar, yf God be pleased, for ther we shal se maruayles of this knight. And thā in y^e court ther begā to be a grete parlyament amonge the knyghtes, & a faythful auowyng to go to the sayd iourney; & so they were of one accord wel to the nōbre of v.C. knyghtes, & they al promised faythfully, in open audience, to be at the sayd batayle, & helpe & to ayde y^e sayd damoyzell.

Than Florence sayd to the King of Orqueney: Fayre cosin, we shal do ryght well to go thyther to help this lady, & also to acquaynt you w^t this gentyll knyght: & for Goddes sake bring him hyther, and I promyse you to loue hym ryght derely, & to giue him suche gyftes and londe, that he shall be ryght ryche & puyssaunt. Well, fayre nece, said the king, I shall do the best of my power.

CAP. LXII.

HOWE THE EMPEROUR WAS AFERDE LEEST FLORENCE SHULDE CAST HER LOUE ON ARTHUR, WHEREFORE HE DEMAUNDED OF THE KYNGE, HER FATHER, TO HAUE HER IN MARYAGE W^tOUT ONY Lenger DELAY: WHEREWYTH THE KYNGE WAS CONTENT, BUT FLORENCE WOLDE NOT AGREE THERTO: WHEREWYTH THE KYNGE, HER FATHER, WAS WYTH HER RYGT SORE DYSPLEASD, AS YE SHALL HERE AFTERWARD.

WHAN that the emperour had herd the gréat praise & laude y^t generally was giuē to Arthur, & perceiued wel how y^t he had the loue of al y^e court, & herde wel the good wordes y^t Florence spake of hī, wherby there strake into his hert a jealousy & a fere lest y^t she shuld cast her loue on him: therfore he toke Kyng Emendus by the hand, and said: Syr, I would fayne speke with you in counsayl; but I pray you, syr, let your doughter be present. Soo than they bothe rose, and Florence with them, and softly she smyled vnto the Kyng of Orquēney, and sayde to hym in counseyle: God gyue grace, that of this counsaile good may come therby; but I fere me the contrary. So thā they thre entred into a chaumbre, and leaned them downe in a fayre wyndowe. Than the emperour began to speke to the kinge, and sayd: Syr, it is of a trouth, that it is a great season past syth ye gaue to me your good wyll, that I shold haue in mariage y^e fayre lady Florence, your doughter, here presente: but she hath euer excused her selfe, because of the late departyng out of this worlde of the quene, her mother: for she thought it was not pertayning to her, to haue bene maryed so soone after her decease: it is now so grete a season syth, that there can no blame be reputed to her now to be married: therefore, syr, nowe I require you that ye wyl incontinent deliuer her to me, according to your promyse made to me before this tyme. In the name of God, sayde the kyng, it is but reason and

right that I should so do, and so I wyll do: wherfore, fayre & swete doughter Florence, ye wer borne in a good houre, whan so noble & so hye a person as the emperour is, wyl haue you in maryage, wherby great honoure and wele shall come to vs all, and to all our cuntryes. Let vs incontinent sende for my brother, the archbysshop, to thentent to ensure you togyther. Right dere father, sayd Florence, it is yet ryght ouer soone to mary me; & for certayne I am not in purpose, as yet, to be maryed to him, nor yet to non other: I think first to se ii. yeres more passed at y^e least. How so! sayd the kyng, damosell, wyl ye than do agenst my wyl, as in the refusynge of the emperour to be your lord in the way of mariage? Syr, sayd she, I haue no care for no lorde, but onely for God & for you: for surely I wyl not consent to no maryage. Ye shall, sayde the kynge, or elles ye shal right sore displese me. Syr, quod she, your displesure shuld greue me aboue al other thinges: but by the faith y^e I owe to you, I wyl not as yet be married. No! sayd the kynge, than I se well y^e ye wyll do nothinge as I cōmaunde you; therefore ye shal do it whether ye wyl or not; & so toke her by the hande, to thentent to haue delyuered her to themperour. And whan she saw that, she was not content, and pulled her hande to her agayne, too thentent that the emperour should not touche it. And whan the kyng saw that, he was ryght sore displeased, and sayde: Damoyssel, ye haue set you against mine accorde and assent, and therefore I promise you, that fro henceforth of my help and counsaile ye shal fayle; therefore fro hensforth do as wel as ye can: & I straitly charge you, auoyd & come no more in my syght, nor presence, nor where soeuer that I be. And whan Florence saw her father so sore dyspleased, she said: Right dere father, if ye be thus dysplesed wth me, ye do not well therin: but syth it is your pleasure that I should take themperour, or elles to lese your cōseyle and helpe, & also not to come in your syghte, the whiche is a ryghte sore sayenge of the fader to his chylde, but syth it is so, I humbly requyre your grase of respyte the space of a moneth, tyll suche tyme that I may speke with my counseyle in that behalfe. Lady, sayd the emperour, it is to longe a respyte, for I wyll departe hense ryghte shortely: for I

troue it be hie tyme, for I haue ben here a longe season; and al that hath your loue caused: wherfore I wold faine, or I depart, knowe how or in what wyse my loue shall be rewarded. I saye not nay, but it is good for you to take auysement, and I am cōtent that ye so do a daye or two. Well, sayd the kyng, I am content that she shall haue respyte tyl to morowe at this same houre, & no lenger. Well, sayd Florence, this counseyle is ayenst my herte & wyll, that I sholde take a man ayenst my herte, seyng y^t I am a quene, & doughter to the moost puyssaūt kyng of all y^e worlde; certaynly this greueth me ryght sore: ther with she began ryght piteously to wepe, & to make right grete sorowe. And whan the kinge sawe her wepe, he sayd to her: Auoyde out of my syght, and let me not se you tyl to morowe agayne at this samē present houre, and than answeere me, wheder ye wyll take hym and my good wyll therwith, or elles leue hym and lese mi good wyl and fauour for euer more. Than Florence issued out of the chaumbre all wepyng.

Than the iiii. kinges stepte to her whan they sawe her wepyng, and lefte all the feest, & mynstrelles & jesters left than al theyr sporte and playe: and the Kyng of Orqueney toke her bi the hande, & demaūded of her, why she wepte so sore? Dere cosyn, said she, my lord, my fader, is right sore dyspleased with me, and hath comemaūded that I sholde auoyde out of his presence. Than she saw her vnclē, the archebyssshop, & sayd to hym: Fayre vnclē, let me go with you to your lodgyng? Wyth a ryght good wyl, sayd he, & shame haue he y^t thus causeth you to wepe. So thus al the kinges conuayed her to her vnclē's lodgyng, and so dyd the moost parte of all the barons of the courte, and also all the new knyghtes: and they al abode stil at Florence courte. And whan she was thus in her lodgyng, the kynges retourned agayne to the Kyng Emendus court, but the Kyng of Orqueney, and Philip his neuue, abode styll wyth Florence: and y^e King of Orqueney demaūded of her why that she wepte? Cosyn, sayde she, my lord, my father, woulde mary me and gyue me to the emperoure, & would haue ensured vs together w^tout any counsayl takyng, eyther of you, or of any other

of my frendes : &, as God helpe me, I had rather dye than to haue themperoure, for I haue no thyng so muche in all the worlde as I doo hym ; for as longe as I lyue I wyl not haue him : therfore it is but a greate foly to enforce me therto. Fayre lady & cosyn, said the kyng, as God helpe me, or he haue you agaynst your wyl, there shal be persed a thousand helmes. Ye, sayd Philyp, the Duke of Sabary, or that daye come there shall be brente a hundreth townes, therof be ye sure ; therefore, fayre ladye, be ye in peas, and set your hert at rest. Well, sayde the archebyssshop, let vs go to the court and speke with thys emperour. So thus they rose, and went forth, & left Florence in peace. And thus they moued vp into the palays, and founde the Kyng Emendus & the emperoure together, who were as than yssued out of the chambre.

Than the archebyssshop sayd to y^e kynge : Fayre broder, I meruayle gretely what counsaile ye haue had, to cause thus to come to your court so many noblemen & other fro so farre countries, to thentent to trouble & displease them by the onely wordes of thys man, the emperour, here present, who would haue my lady Florence, your daughter, in mariage against her wyl : but, syr, I ensure you, as long as I liue, agenst her wil he getteth her not. As God helpe me, saide Philyp, y^e Duke of Sabary, he had nede to haue brought mo men hether than he hath done, yf he thinketh to haue her awaye to her dyspleasure. Why ? said themperour, & who is he that wyl say me nay ? Is it you ? I wold there were none to depart y^e matter but ye and I, to se who should lede her awai. Verely, sayd the Kynge of Orqueney, it is none egale matche, a duke agenst an emperour : howe be it, as God helpe me, yf ye had her agaynst her wyl, and none other to medle in the matter but al onely you, I thinke ye should not reioyse her so easely as ye thynke of : and be ye in certain, that in that quarrell he wyl & shal defende her against you : and therin do the best ye can w^t all your power, & begin whan ye wyl, for he doubteth you nothyng, nor shall do. And whan the Kyng Emendus hearde theym saye these wordes, he was right sore displesed, and sayd : What is this, syrs, are we taken prisoners ? Lay ye thus in a wayt to menace thus, in my presence, my lorde and frende, the

emperour? Truly if ye cōtinue in this purpose, ye shal know that I am ryght sore dysplesed wyth you all.

Than the archbyssshop answered hym agayne right sharplye; and so there began mucche hurlynge and burlynge in the courte, and mucche ado was there likely to haue bē done: but, as fortune was, in the meane seasō maister Steuen was aryued at the palais, & entred into the hall, & xl. knightes wyth hym. And whan he herd thys noyse and stryfe, he spake aloud, & cryed: Peace! for Goddes sake! and dyd soo mucche, that he apeased somewhat y^e noyse. And as sone as the Kyng of Valefound saw mayster Steuen, hys son, he ran & enbraced and kyssed him, and demaunded howe he dyd? And he answered, and said: Sir, right wel, thanked be God. And than all other kynges dyd welcome him, and so did Kyng Emendus, & also the emperour: and demaunded of him, how he had done sith his departing out of the courte? And he answered, and sayd: Ryght wel. Than he perceyued right wel how that the kyng and the archebisshop were right sore displesed together; wherfore he said to y^e kyng: Syr, what chere is with you? this daye is a right hye & solempne daye; whye is your barons and courte thus troubled? thys day should be of sporte and playe. Mayster Steuen, sayd the kyng, I cannot be mery; for your lady, my doughter Florence, hath dysplesed me; for she wyl not do that thyng that I would haue her to do, wherwith I am nothings content; wherfore, I pray you, assaye and ye can reduce her to my mynde. Syr, sayde maister Steuen, I trust I shal do so moche, that of reason ye shal be content. So of this matter they talked a great space.

CAP. LXIII.

HOWE FLORENCE, WHAN SHE KNEW THAT MAYSTER STEUEN WAS COME TO THE COURT, SHE WAS RIGHT GLAD: AND HOWE Y^t HE, WITH HIS POLICIE, GATE HER Lenger RESPYT: Y^t WAS TYL BARTYLMewe TYDE NEXT AFTER.

AL this season was y^e noble lady Florence in her chābre, making right great sorow, sore wepynge, and saying to her self: A! noble Arthur! swete frende! fre & gentyll of hearte! I neuer saw you, and yet I loue you with all my herte. I had thought to haue ben vnmaryed tyll the season of your comynge to thys courte: but now I se well that I must nedes take hym that I hate moost. I loue you, but I can not haue you. A! fortune! how arte thou tourned ayenst me? I hate hym y^t I muste haue; I loue hym that I must lese: certaynly, dere loue Arthur, if ye lose me thus, ye shal haue great damage; for ye shal lese her y^t loueth you truly. A! mayster Steuen, why haue I not you here now in my great nede? If ye knewe of my sorowe, I am sure nothyng coulede let you, but y^t ye wolde tourne vp so downe this maryage.

And as she thus complayned piteously, tidinges came to her lodgyng, that mayster Steuen was comen to the courte. And as soone as she herd that, her hert began to come agayne to her; for than she thought veryly that she neded to care for nothyng. Than she ryght hastely sent for hym. And as soone as the mayster knewe therof, he sayde to the kyng: Syr, my lady hath sent for me to come to her grace. Go your way, sayd the kyng. So thus the mayster departed, and the archebyssshop wyth hym, and the Kynge of Orqueney, and hys neuewe syr Phylp, Duke of Sabery; and soo they all aryued togyther, where as Florence was. And the other kynges abode w^t the king and themperour. And the noble barons of the courte, and all the newe knyghtes, were at Florence lodgyng ryght sore displeased, bycause of her dyspleasure: but they were all gladde whan the Kynge of Orqueney, & mayster

Steuen were comen. Than the mayster entred into Florence chambre, & goodly dyd salute her; but as than she could speke no worde, but toke hym by the hande and caused hym to syt downe by her syde. And whā her hert came to her, she sayd how y^t he was ryght welcome, as he whome she desyred to haue, at that tyme, aboue all the creatures of y^e worlde. Than the mayster sayd to her: Madame, is thys a fayre aray that ye make thus for your estate, thus to bring your selfe in sorowe, & thus to bringe all your people, & these gentyll knyghtes in great trouble for your sorowe, who are thus come to your courte to do you honoure? for they haue left the kyng your father to come to your lodgyng in this hye solempne day: therfore leue ye this sorowe, & make suche chere as pertayneth to an hie joyfull pryncesse; reioyse your courte & your people. Than Florence answered, & sayd: A! mayster! swete frende! I can not be mery, for I am gretly greued at the hert: for my lord my father hath defēded me to come in his presence for a straūger, whome he wolde that I should take in mariage: but God shal rather gyue me deth than I wyll take hym, for I hate hym w^t all my herte; & it behoueth me to answer whether I wyl haue hym or not, betwene this and to morowe thys tyme; & I haue grete despite that I shulde thus be delt withall w^t a straūger. Madame, sayd the mayster, now be ye in reste & peas; for syth ye haue a day respyte, I shall gete you nye a hole yere lenger delaye: & I trust suche fortune may fal, that or the yere be ron ye shall not haue hym. A! dere mayster! sayd she, I hertely thanke you, & promyse you that though thys emperour be neuer soo ryche or puyssaunt, or full of noblenes & power, yet I haue no heart of all his rychesse: for I thanke God I am now one of the puyssaūtest ladyes y^t is lyuynge: therfore I care not for hym, nor for all his power. Madame, sayd the mayster, now thā I se well y^t your herte is set on no couetyse, but as me semeth youre heart is set all on gentylnes; and byleue veryly that loue in your heart is free & swete where as it ought to be, to all people, excepte to themperour; for there I thynke your hert is fell & hateful: but, madame, here be two thynges contrary to be in one heart, both loue & hate:

how may it agre togyther? to loue & to hate, to be meke & fell? I can not se how this may be. A! mayster, sayd she, haue no maruayle of thys, though I say that my heart is both meke and fell; certaynly my heart is fel where as it hateth. Why, madame, quod the maister, do ye thā hate? Truly, quod she, ye & y^t right sore, & y^t is themperour, who wold haue me ayenst my wyll; by the holy martyr Saynt Steuen of Corinte, he shal not haue me by my good wyl: & if he take me by force, I trust he shal well knowe that he dyd neuer soo great a folly. Madame, sayd the mayster, maryage y^t is made by force, is greatly to be doubted: but whan it is made mekely and swetely, by the agreement of both partyes, than lyghtly loue contynueth euer after bytwene them: & whan it is contrary, oftē tymes both partyes endureth many yll dayes and nyghtes. But, madame, now I knowe wel to whom your hert is hateful; but I pray you let me know ayenst whome your heart is meke & amyable? Thā she beheld the mayster, & syghed right sore. And whā the mayster herd her sygh, a lytle he smyled. And whā she saw hym laughe she was a lytle ashamed, and blusshed therwyth, & all smylynge sayd: A! mayster, ye know well ynoughe all this as wel as I do myself; for I neuer saw him as yet that hath shewed me amyte & loue: I se right wel dayly my hertes enemy: but mine owne dere loue I neuer sawe; but I se dayly hym that I hate, but I can not se hym that I loue. Mayster, ye knowe what he is better than I do; therefore I pray you shew me what ye know of him, for ye haue gyuen away my white shelde and good swerde Clarence, and I wote not to what knyght, nor whether they be wel employed or not. Madame, quod the mayster, I shal shewe you: I wyl that ye know that I haue gyuen them to the moost fayre and gracyous knyghte that now lyueth, and freest of heart in al gentylnes that can be founde in al the worlde; for he is the chefe floure of bounte in all maner of chyualry; also he is the best knyght that euer was gyrt wyth swerde, syth the tyme of Gawane and Launcelot; and the best approued knyght that euer hath ben herde of, who hath set his faythful heart wythout eyther fraude or falshode on your loue; and to hym, in my presence,

your ymage hath gyuen and set on his heed your chaplet. Than Florence heart began to tremble, and sayd: Gentil mayster! I doubte me greatly that ye gyue him a greter prayse than he is worthy; for ye haue praysed hym ryght greatly. Madame, truely, sayde he, all that I haue sayd is of trouth; for he is worthy to haue more prayse than I haue gyuen hym. Well, mayster, sayd she, is al this of trouth? Ye truly, madame, sayd he. By the fayth that I owe vnto God, sayd Florence, than I se wel he is worthy to haue muche honour: & I promyse you he shall not fayle therof, yf God sende me lyfe: and he shall not lese his loue; for syth he loueth me, as God helpe me I shall loue hym agayne; for reason requyreth to loue him that loueth me. Than sayd the mayster: I se well nexte the kynge your father ye loue themperour, bicause he loueth you. Than Florence smyled, & with her hande strake him on the sholdre, & sayd: Mayster, there as I am pleased there I loue; but I care not for hym that is ayenst my heart: one of these two pleaseth me, and the other I hate: I praye God that he maye come y^t I loue, & I wolde he were gone y^t anoyeth me: he that hath my chaplet, my shelde & sward, hath my loue more thā any other of the worlde; and the emperoure hath my hate more than onye other lyuyng creature. I loue hym that I neuer sawe, and hate hym whome I se dayly. Mayster, now I haue shewed you all my couñseyle, as to hym in whome I trust moost: ye be my clerke and my man: ye knowe nowe as muche of my counseyle as God dooth; therfore I requyre you kepe it secrete, and put to your payne that I maye haue hym on whome my heart and loue is layde; for now ye knowe on whome it is set. Than the mayster sayd: Madame, as God helpe me, ye haue ryght well sette your hert on the best and fayrest knyght of all the worlde; that is the gentyll Arthur.

And as they thus talked, there came to them the Kynge of Orquene, and Phylp, hys neuewe, and the archebyssshop, & Brysebar, her senesshall, and syr Aunsel. Than Florence rose ayenst them, and also the mayster; and so they had all greate joye of Florence whā they sawe her make better chere than she dyd before. At the last the mayster sayd: Lordes, I se wel how y^t the noble courte

of myghty Kyng Emendus is all in a traunce, in a maner halfe a slepe : for there is neyther playe nor joye, wherof the kyng is greatly to be blamed ; for it is greate shame, bycause so many noble men be here at thys feest : therfore, in my mynde, it were good to take some counseyle to se howe the courte myght be rejoyssed agayne : let vs sende word to the kyng, how that my lady Florence is redye to gyue her answeere now, the whyche she should gyue to morowe ; and I promyse you that I shall soo answeere for her, that she shall haue lenger respyte an hole yere : and I trust soo to appease both the kinge and themperour, that of reason they shall be wel content. Than the Kyng of Orqueney sayd : Mayster, I se wel how that ye haue not as yet forgotten all your olde cōnynges : I wene ye wyl bryng them al a slepe wyth waggynge of your hande. Than the archebyssshop dyd laugh, and so they were al of his accorde. Than they sent to the kyng, Duke Phylp, and syr Brysebar, and the kyng had ryght great joy whan he herde theyr message, & sayd : Truly mayster Steuen, I se ryght well, hath gyuen her good cōseyle : he is a ryght noble clerke : I praye to God sende hym ryght good aduenture. And so these messengers retourned agayne, & shewed how that the kyng was right well content, & was right joyfull to here her answeere. Than Florence apparayled her to go to the courte. So the Kyng of Orqueney dyd conuey her, and the Kyng of Mormall dyd mete them by the way ; and the archebyssshop & mayster Steuen went before. Than all the knightes assembled them togyther, & were wel to the nombre of CCCCC. and all they folowed after Florence, and in theyr hartes they cursed hym that was causer of thys pletinge and varyaunce, and prayed to God y^t themperour myght want of his wyl. Thus Florence entred into the palays, and themperoure dyd salute her, and soo dyd all other excepte the kyng her father. Than themperour sate downe, and Florence by hym, & the Kyng Emendus, and the Kyng of Orqueney before hym ; & so all other, euery man in his rounge. And whan euery man was in peas, than mayster Steuen sayd to the kyng : Syr, and it lyke your grace, beholde here your doughter and louer. Certaynlye, sayd the king, my

doughter I beleue wel that she be; but as for any loue or amitye that she bereth to me, y^e I can neyther knowe nor se, for she hath displeased me: for beholde here my lorde and dere frende the emperour of Ynde, who hath done vs so great honour, that he would haue her by the way of maryage, who is come to desyre to haue her in hys owne propre person, without anye other meane messenger; and yet she is so daūgerous, that she demaundeth counsaile in thys case; the which toucheth her honour and profite, and wyl not beleue me that am her own father; wherwyth I am ryghte sore dyspleased, & bere her ryght sore in my heart.

Than the mayster rose vp on hys fete, and his hat hāging on his sholdre, in a robe of skarlet lyned wyth grene sarcenet, holdyng his gloues folded in hys hand, and semed ryght fayre & gracyous, neyther to muche nor to lytel of stature, his face somewhat full and round, and his heyre fayre and yelow: he was a fayre clerke, and sonne to a kyng and a quene: and so in open audyence than he sayde: Ryght excellent, hye, and mighty prince! my ladyes grace here presente, the noble and gentil Florence, is yet in great trouble and sorow of herte, of the great hardenes that ye haue shewed her thys day, & because it semeth that ye haue a maner of dysplesure to her warde; wherefore she is not, nor can not be in ioye nor rest as longe as ye haue that wyll towarde her. Syr, now she is here comen to you as she that forthynketh of your dysplesure; for she doth not, nor wyl not do nothing that shall be contrarye to your pleasure and wyll; but she is, and euer shall be, redy to accomplysh your noble commaundement accordyng to her herte, the whiche is good and true both agenst you & all other personnes where as it ought so to be: &, Syr, syth it is so that my lorde the noble emperour here present wyl do her so much honour as to desyre to haue her in maryage, whereof humbly she thanketh him; but it is wel the custome, accordyng to the state of euerye person, to dele dyscretelye and wyselye in suche a case: therfore, syr, it is conuenyent to dele prudently in this matter; for y^e emperour & you are two of the greatest & puissantest persons, both of hauour and of frendes, that is nowe lyuyng: and my lady Florence is the moste hye & puissaunt pryncesse of all the worlde; and as

touchynge so hye & solempne a matter as of the maryage of themperour of Ynde and of the doughter of the hye and mightye Kyng Emendus, this hye & great solempnitie ought not to be done priuely in chaumbres in rest & peace, but it ought to be done in the open presence of all the barons of bothe landes & realmes, to thentent y^t yf God sende anye yssue betwene theym, that theyr mariage may be knowen opely to al people of bothe realmes, wherby shall be eschewed all grudge & murmuracyon, for than such yssue shall be wel knowen for ryghtful heyre throughout bothe the regyons: nor also it is not conuenient that this solempne feast that is thys day of the Holy Ghoste, and thys solempne feast of this noble matrymonye should be made al but as one feast: this day is so hye & princypally a feast, that euery Christen man ought to do nothyng elles but laude and serue God: and, syr, at the daye of this noble mariage let there be here kinges, dukes, barons, & other noble knyghtes, ladies, & damoisselles; & let all these do suche seruyce as aperteineth for them to do: and than let these ladyes and damoyselles daūce & synge, & gyue to these newe knyghtes chaplettes & stremers, & set on theyr spere poyntes; & let these yonge lusty knyghtes frusshe togyther theyr speres, & dasshe togyther with theyr swerdes; and let than be ordeyned rounde tables to assemble togyther such company as shal be brought thither, both by you, my lord the kyng, and also by the emperour; than shall we se what knyght is of valure & prayse: at the whyche tyme shal be brought hither the riche pauylion of my lady Florēce, wherin is the ymage of the fayry holdynge the ryche chaplet; so y^t whan the tournay shal be done, than my lord themperour shal go to the image to haue the chaplet, as he y^t is right ryche both of hauour & of frendes, & the moost noble parson y^t there shal be assembled: and to hym the ymage wyl giue the chaplet as to him that is moost worthy; and whan he hath it, than he shal be sure and certayne that he shall haue my lady Florence wyth good wyll & entyre loue, and that maryage y^t is made with good loue and hert is good, & that that is contrary ayenst the hert is ryght yl & ieopardous: for a body without herte, is as mete w^tout salt, or as a body without soule;

and thus may my lorde themperour haue my lady Florence wyth great loue, ioy, and feest.

And whan the emperour had well herde the mayster, & saw how y^t he spake no more, his herte laughed in his bodye, & sayd: By the fayth that I owe vnto God, the mayster hath ryght well sayd; & veryly wyth a great good herte I me accorde to hys deuise: let this ioyfull daye be set, and let there be cryed a great justes & a tournay ayenst y^t tyme, and let there be ordeined rounde tables to make feest and ioye; and, syr kyng, the same day I wyll take the tournay ayenst you all in loue & fauour. As God helpe me, sayd the kynge, I am ryght wel agreed, and myne aduise is to let al this be here in this cyte of Cornyte. But what day shall all thys be on? Syr, sayd the mayster, and it please you I shall shewe you mine aduise: let it be at Bartylmewe tyde nexte comynge, for than shal all cornes be auoyded oute of y^e felde, and by that time al thing necessary may be honourably prouyded for. I am content, sayd the kynge; but how say you, my lorde themperour? Sir, said he, I am right well content. Than anone these poyntementes ran ouer all the palays in euery mannes mouth, and euery man prayed y^t God might send to the mayster right good aduēture for his wel and goodly speakynge.

Than began agayne right great feest and joy: thā came forth juglers w^t theyr fals castes, & tomblers wyth theyr soubersawtes, & damoysselles wyth theyr gambawdes, & made greater sporte and tryumphe than was before. Than the kynge & themperour laughed and made great ioye together tyl it was tyme to set the tables: than water was brought forth, and Florēce toke lycence of the kyng, her father, & sayd: Syr, I beseche your grace be not dyspleased though these newe knyghtes go wyth me to my lodgyng, and though I retayne them w^t me all this daye. Well, sayd the kynge, I am ryght well content: go your way hardely, and make them as good chere as ye can. Than Florence departed and went to her chaumbre, and the king abode styll in the palays. And the Kynge of Orqueney, Phylp of Sabary, & the Archebyssshop, & Brysebar, & well to the nombre of v. C. barons & knyghtes went

w^t Florence to her lodgyng. And than the mayster said to her : Madame, how saye ye now ? we haue respyte longe ynough, for many thynges may fall betwene thys & that. Maister, ye say ryght well ; but I pray you tel me, wyl not our knyght be here betwene this & that terme ? Madame, sayd he, I sè well ye haue not as yet forgotten him : it semeth he is yet in your remembraunce. By the good Lorde, sayd Florence, I wold ryght gladly se hym ! & yf God be pleased, yf he come to this sayd turney, I shal do hym honor ; and that, I pray you, let hym know it. Madam, quod y^e maister, I shal go to hym and shew him al this matter, and how y^t ye desyre him to be there at y^t time, & that for your loue there to shew part of his chyualry. Well, maister, sayd she, ye say right well, and I pray you let me be herteli cōmended vnto him.

Thus they deuised that the maister shuld go to the Porte Noyre tyl the time of this tournay, & than he should bringe wyth him Florence paulion with the egle of gold and the ymage with the chaplet, & that it should be pyght in y^e fayre medow vnder the walles of the cite of Cornte. Than there was water brought forth, and so they were serued full rychely w^t great sport & triumphe. Thus the kyng keppe open court xv. dayes, & euery day ones Florence wente to her fathers court. At thende of xv. dayes y^e kyng dyd gyue many ryche gyftes to these knightes, both robes, hors, & harneys ; & Florence in lykewyse gaue them so largelye, y^t it was meruayle to consyder : & they sayde all w^t one voyce, y^t there was neuer before suche a hearte of a woman, neyther so large, so gentyll, nor so curteyse. Thus al these kings toke their leue & departed euery man to hys owne coūtre, to puruay him of good knightes agenst the sayd day. Than mayster Steuen was afore Florence, & sayd : Madam, now it is tyme y^t I depart, for now wyl I go streyghte to Argence, where I am sure y^t I shall fynd Arthur redy to fyght agenst the neuw of the Duke of Bigor. A ! fayre maister, said Florence, I haue grete doubt of Arthur, for the dukes neuwe is right fierce and fell, & a good knight ; therefore I am in great feare of him. Madam, quod he, haue ye no dout ; for if there were such iiii. as he is, afore Arthur, thei could not endure his puyssant strokes. Thā he is right valyant, quod

Florence. Than y^e maister toke his leue and departed, & toke w^t him Brysebar, & syr Neuelon, Florence marishal, & so toke their waye to Argēce.

Now let vs leue to speake of them, & let vs returne again to Arthur.

CAP. LXIV.

HOW THAT ARTHUR WAS RECEYUED OF THE FAYRE LADY MARGARETE INTO THE CITIE OF ARGENCE.

THUS, as ye haue herde before, Arthur soiourned a good space at the Abbey of the Grace de Dieu, & Mawdelayne tyde began faste to approche: & so on a daye the foule vylayne came vnto him, and sayd: We be but swyne, for we do nothyng but eate and drynke: I trowe ye be wedded to thys abbey, or elles I thynke ye wyl become a monke: ye haue promysed me to fulfyll my requeste; yf that ye wyll do so, go shortely and arme you, and let vs goo to Argence, to helpe there the fayre lady Margarete of Argenton, and to gete her agayne her ryght: for it is now almoost hye tyme. Whan Arthur hearde hym, he smyled, and sayd: Wyth a ryght good wyll. And soo he armed hym, and toke leue of the abbot and of the cōuent, and mounted on hys horse, and folowed the vylayne. And soo Arthur rode forth daye by daye, tyll at the laste he descended downe from a greate mountayne, and entred into the fayrest medowe that euer he sawe in all hys lyfe: and by the syde of thys sayd medowe there ranne a fayre ryuer, wherein were manye shyppes, some vnder sayle, and some redye crossed, and some lienge at the anger, the whyche ryuer ranne thurghout parte of the fayre cyte of Argence. And than he encountred a varlet who came streyght fro the cyte, and Arthur did salute hym, and demaunded from whence he came? And he answered, and sayd, howe that he came from the cyte of Argence, the wofullest cyte of the worlde at thys tyme, and is in moost tourmente and

sorowe: for I am sure there was neuer towne so sore troubled as it is at this houre. And wherfore, good frende? sayd Arthur. Syr, as God helpe me, there is good cause why: for the Duke of Bygor and his neuewe be comynge to the cyte, & they haue made a cry throughout all the cite & all about the countre, that all the noble men and al other, suche as holdeth theyr londs of the heyre of Argenton, should be, at Mawdelayne tyde nexte comynge, before theym in the cyte of Argence, to do theyr homage to syr Isembarte, the dukes neuewe: wherfore I praye to God he maye dye an euil deth: & it is but xv. dayes to the sayd daye, at whyche tyme he is purposed to wedde the fayre lady Margarete to a lewde barbour of hys, & so she shall be dyssheryted fro her enherytaunce: & all the noble men & bourgeyses of the cite & of the countre aboute are ryght sore dysmayed, for thei wote not what counseyle to take in the case for lacke of a capytayne; and the lady hath noo frende but an vnkle of hers, who is put in pryson by the dukes neuewe, and there is none can tell where he is become. And also this syr Isembarte hath slayne and murthred falsly, by treason, her father. And, syr, this is the sorowe that is in the noble cyte of Argence. Wel, good frende, sayd Arthur, God conduyte you! God is yet puyssaunt ynough to sende helpe to this lady. But, frende, I praye you is thys duke and hys neuewe come as yet to the cyte? Syr, as God helpe me, he is come al redy, and wyth hym moche people, for his people is nōbred to a M. persons at the leest. That is a great company, sayd Arthur: & soo they departed, & Arthur rode forth.

Than the vylayne began to cry: He is come that shal giue light! And euer, as he rode, he behelde on euery syde about him great cōpanyes of knyghtes comynge & goynge towarde the cyte of Argence: & Arthur saw wel how that the lond of Argēton was the moost goodlyest cōūtre that euer he sawe, for he perceyued wel how that it was ful of riches and worldly welth: he sawe many noble townes, and toures ryght hye, & myghty castelles, & many fayre woodes, and medowes, and pleasaunt ryuers, and about the townes fayre vynes, & goodly pastures, & fieldes with corne and fruite. And there he saw many ladies and damoyelles sporting

them by the ryuers syde w^t fawcons & gerfawcons on theyr hands. And so he perceiued wel, that bicause of y^e good comodities of the country, y^e dukes neuwe would disheryte the fayre ladye Margaret: & he rode so long til at the last he saw the fayre citie of Argence shining agenst the sonne, enuoyred with greate & depe dyches ful of water, y^e walles strōgly enbatayled, and mo than v.C. toures made of lyme & stone, & sciment about it; and also he saw manye fayre churches couered w^t lede, ful of typpes and pomelles of gold shynying against the sonne; & also he sawe the burgeses lodging closed w^t hye and stronge walles, barred wyth great chaines of yron attaining fro one house to an other. Than Arthur, in his hert, praysed muche the noblenesse and riches of the countre and of the citie, and sayde to hym selfe, that it might well be called Argence, for it semed wel to be of argent; that is to say, syluer. Thus Arthur entred into the citie; & the vylain went euer before him, w^t his leuer on his neck, bare legged, and his hat hanging at his back: & euer he went forth a great pace, loking downeward to the earth, and toke hede of no body that he met, but alwaies cryed out aloud: He is come that shal gyue lyght! And the burgeses behelde hym well, and sayd, howe that he was a fole. Women and chyl dren ran to the wyndowes to beholde hym. And whan one bodye spake to hym, he woulde aunswere nothyng, but alwayes sayd: He is come that shall gyue lyghte!

Thus Arthur rode forthe into the cytie, and sawe there nothyng to do, nor noo maner of crafte or occupacion there vsed, no more than and it had bene vpon an hye feastfull day; for al the shoppes and euery craft was shet & closed, wherof Arthur had great meruayle: and he behelde in euery strete gret companyes of knightes walkyng al soberly together, lurkyng vnder their hattes, beseming as though they had not bē well pleased: & some sytting before their owne dores, croslegged, leaning on their elbowes, makyng no maner of joyfull semblaunt, but soberly musinge: & some of them behelde the vylayne, who neuer ceased crying: He is come that shal gyue light!

And so in this maner Arthur rode euer styll forthe tyll he came into y^e myddes of the citie; and there he saw a great companye of

knyghtes and burgeyses, aboute the number of xxxv., talkynge together in counsayl: but it semed, by their chere, that they had no great ioy in their heartes. Than the vylayn enforced himselfe to crye louder than he dydde before: He is come that shal gyue lyghte! Than these knyghtes behelde the vylayne wel, and saw how that Arthur folowed him, whereof they had greate maruayle. And at the last, a knight of that company, called syr Emery, came to Arthur, and curteysly dyd salute him, and sayd: Syr, it is myne offyce in this cite to receyue and to lodge al gentilmen straungers y^t resorteth hyther: and, syr, here is myne house; therefore I desyre you to alyght of youre horse, and to entre into it. Syr, I thanke you, sayd Arthur: how be it, I se wel y^t I must nedes go ferder to seke mi lodging. Syr, sayde the knyght, sauynge your dysplesure, ye shal not passe by my house to seeke an other lodgyng; therefore, by the fayth y^t I owe vnto God, ye shal abyde wth me. Ye, but, syr, sayd the vylayn, I trowe ye wyll not abyde, for ye haue promysed to folowe me whether so euer I go; therefore come on your way, for I wyl go before: and so was goyng forth, and euer cryed: He is come that shall gyue lyghte! Than Arthur desyred the vylayne to tary; and at the last he agreed thereto; and Arthur rode forthe to syr Emerys dore, and there alighted. Than the other knyghtes left theyr counseyle and dyd salute Arthur, and he them agayne right courteously: and they beheld Arthur wel, and praysed him mucche in their heartes, for he was right fayre and gracious. Than syr Emery toke Arthur by the hand, and led hym into a fayre chambre to vnarme hym. And in the meane tyme that he was vnarmynge, mayster Steuen, syr Brysebar, and syr Neuelon, the senesshal, wer come to the same syr Emeris house to take theyr lodgyng there, and so toke theyr chaumbre. And whan the mayster had chaunged his gere, he wente downe into the hall, and the other twoo knyghtes with him: & the vylain knew them ryght well, and called them by their names. And therewithal Bawdewin came out of the chaumbre fro Arthur; and as soone as he sawe the maister and Brisebar, he ranne and courteously dyd salute them with a ioyfull heart. Than y^e mayster demaunded of him, where as Arthur his

mayster was? Syr, sayde he, in thys chambre hereby. And than they all entred into the chaumbre. And as soone as Arthur sawe them, he ranne and enbrased the mayster, and after Brysebar, and sayd: Mine owne good companions of y^e Roche, hither ye be right hertely welcome. Also he dyd salute syr Neuelon, the senesshall, who in his herte praysed hym gretely. And whan syr Emery saw how the mayster made so great chere to Arthur, than he thought verelye that he should be some great man: for he knewe wel that the maister was a kinges son. Than they sate them down on a beddes syde. Than the maister recounted al the werke that had bene in King Emendus courte, and how that themperour desyred to haue had Florence in maryage at the same tyme, and shewed hym how, by hys meanes, he dyd lette it at that tyme, and gate lenger respyte tyl Bartylmew tyde, at which time there is cryed a great justes and tournaye: and there he shewed him, in his eare, the salutation that Florence dyd sende hym; and how that she desyred hym to be there at that time, and to shewe there parte of his prowes for her sake. Than Arthur smyled, and enbraced the maister manye times. And whan they had thus talked a good space, than the maister called to hym sir Emery, theyr hoost, and caused hym to sytte downe by them. Than Arthur demaunded of hym, wherefore the knyghtes and cytezyns of that citie were so sad? And he answered, and sayde: Syr, for it wyll be no better, and we haue all good cause so to do: and than he began to shewe hym how that in the same house there was a damosel, who was doughter to the lord of that same cytye, and of all the londe of Argenton; and how that she was the ryghtful heyre of all that countrey; and how that the Duke of Bygores neuewe dyd falselye murdre, by treason, the lorde her father; & so shewed hym al the hole matter, as ye haue hearde before; and also he shewed hym howe that the dukes neuew would mary her to a lewd ladde, hys barbour; and how that he had dysherytred her of forty thousande pounce of lond by yerely rent; and now he hath sommoned all the gentylmen of all the country round about, and wil that they shall do homage vnto hym: and so it behoueth theym to haue a false murtherer to their lorde, and to reny their rightful

heyre; & therefore, syr, al the noble men of this country & citie haue bene in coūsaill for this mater: but y^e conclusion of their coūsaill was thus, how that they wolde make no maner of resistance agenst y^e dukes neuew, but rather suffre their ladie to be disherited and banished from her owne lande: how be it, right gladly they would moue war against him, but they lacke a captayne, for they thynke verely that a womā to be chief head in warre shuld cause it at length to be of lytel effect. Than Arthur sayd: Syr, I haue somewhat herde or this of this matter: but I pray you, fayre host, is this sayd lady here in your hous? Ye, syr, truly, said he, here benethe in a fayre parloure, for she hath bene euer here in my hous sithe the deth of her father; for I haue promised neuer to fayle her. Than maister Steuen said: Good hoost, I requyre you know this ladyes plesure, whether she wyll be content that we might speke with her. Syr, sayd he, with a right good wyll.

Than he went into the parlour, where as she was the same tyme beginnyng of our ladies euensong, & was at these wordes: (Deus in adiutorium meū intēde); that is to say, Good Lord entend to mine ayd & succoure. And therwith she espied syr Emery, and sayde: Syr, ye be welcome. And he dyd salue her, and sayd: Madame, here is aboue, in a chambre, a knyght, the moost fayrest creature of the worlde: and maister Steuen, the Kynge of Soroloys clerke, and sone vnto the noble Kynge of Valefound, dothe honour to thys knyght; the which knight wold faine speake with you: and, as God helpe me, as I perceyue by hym, he is in wyl to helpe and succour you in your nede. Shall I cause hym to come to speke w^t you? To come to me, fayre frend! quod the lady; nay, God forbydde! for they that haue nede ought to seeke for helpe, and not to tary tyl it be brought to them; for, and they doo, it may fortune to come to late; and as for me, I haue great nede of him yf he would helpe me: as for him he hath no nede of me; therefore it is reason that I go vnto hym. Than she apparayled her, and went forth and entred into the chambre where as they were: and as soone as they saw her, they rose and dyd salute her, & caused her to syt downe: and she semed to them ryghte fayre, gentyll, and gracyous, and dyd salute them one after another ryghte swetelye.

Than Arthur said: Fayre lady, why haue ye trauailed yourselfe so sore to come hyther to vs, for we would gladly haue come to you? She answered, and sayde: Syr, it is reason that I shuld so do, for I am a poore disherited ladye, & therefore it is reason that I go sewe for helpe & sucour. Thā maister Steuen demaūded of her estate; & she recounted to him euery dele, as ye haue herde here before, & ryght sore weping said: Alas! I pore desolate creature, that was wont to be kept in great honour with my lorde and father, who falsly was slaine by this dukes neuew, and hath put myn vnclē in prison, I cannot tel wheeder he be aliuē or dead. Certaynly, fayre lady, sayd mayster Steuen, for Goddes sake be ye of good chere, for your vnclē is in good helthe, and oute of pryson; by the same token that he is called the Markes; and also he hath an olde hurt on his browe. And as soone as she herde that, her hert began to reioyce, and she demaunded, for Goddes sake, to know who had delyuered hym out of pryson. Certaynely, fayre lady, sayde he, the same knyghte that sytteth here by you, who hath conquered the straūge castell of the Porte Noyre. And whan she herd that, she fell downe on her knees before Arthur, & humbly thanked hym. Than Arthur toke her vp, and sayd: Alas! fayre lady, why do you thus? For Goddes sake sette youre herte in peace and rest; for truely I offre my seruyce to you, and the best of my power to helpe and defende your ryght: yf it be to morowe nexte, I shall be redye to sustayne the batayle as longe as my lyfe wyl laste. Than the lady wold haue kneled downe, & ryght humbly thanked hym, & sayd: Syr, I gyue to you all my ryght and enherytaunce whan ye haue wonne it, and myne vnclē shal be your seruaunt. Alas! I can saye no more: I haue lost my father, wherfore it is great damage that I lyue, for I am wery of my lyfe: than she began to wepe, & sayd: Syr, I had rather that you had my right than my mortall enemy. My swete lady, sayd Arthur, yf God be pleased, I shall delyuer it vnto your owne profyte: for truly I wyll not haue therof the mountenaunce of a peny. And syr Emery, whan he herd that this knyght had delyuered out of pryson the Markes, & howe that he had acheued the aduentures of the Porte Noyre, than he thought veryly in hys herte

that it was he that had acheued the aduētūres of the Tenebrous Toure. Than he stept forth and kneled downe before Arthur, & sayd: gentyll and noble knyght, in whome all boūte flouryssheth, for Goddes sake brynge vs out of derke trybulacyon that we be in, and make lyght all the heartes of the hole barony of Argenton: take thys enterpryse on you, and all we shall largely helpe and ayde you: I vndertake ye shal haue xl. thousand persons in harneys to gyue attendaunce on you, the whyche are all subiectes to my lady here presēt. And, syr, knowe ye for certayne that I haue all redy, & shall prouyde for horses, & harneys, and golde, & siluer, suffycient to sustayne your hoost lenger space than a yere, the whyche I wyl all habandon into your handes for the helpynge of my lady. And I am here redy the fyrste that wyl put my body and lyfe in jeoperdy. Madame, sayd Arthur, yf all your other knyghtes be suche, ye haue muche good people and kynde. Than he said to syr Emery: Syr, and I promyse you faythfully to helpe thys lady to the best of my power.

Than syr Emery departed fro them, and went & assembled togyther all the other knyghtes of the cyte y^t were pertaynyng to the lady, and sayd: Lordes & maysters, I thynke veryly that God hath vysyted vs; for I shewe ynto you, how that there is a knyght in my hous, who hath delyuered out of prison the noble Markes, vncke to my lady; & also he hath acheued all the aduentures of the Porte Noyre, as maister Steuen hath shewed vnto my lady; and, accordynge to the trouth, I thynke it be he that did great prowesse in the Valey of Valefounde, & at the Tour Tenebrous: and also he hathe habandoned hymselfe to be redy at my ladyes cōmaundemente, & to defende her ryghte ayenst the dukes neuewe, though he be neuer so fell. Certaynly, frende, sayd all those knyghtes, we byleue veryly y^t all hys trauayle is in wast: for thys dukes neuewe is ryght fyerse, & doubteth no creature: for there is not suche a knyghte in all the worlde, wythout it be the knyght y^t hath acheued the sayd aduētūres that ye speke of. Veryly, sayd syr Emery, I beleue the same knyght is he; & at the leest I am in certayne it is he that hath cōquered the Port Noyre. Thā anone

these tydynges were spred abroad throughout all the cyte. Than there came knyghtes and burgeyses by great companyes into syr Emeris hous to se this straunge knyght; & so they entred into a great hall; & whan they were gathered together, they were to the numbre of v.C. persones: & than they desyred syr Emery to go & shewe vnto this knight straunger, y^t manye of the knyghtes of Argence were come thither too speke with hym. And whan Arthur herde this he was very ioyfull, and rose, & he and the mayster went forth into the hall, & brought with thē the fayre lady Margarete. And whan Arthur was amonge them, he was byg, and mighty, & hye to beholde, with byg armes and longe, wel furnisshed, and he had on a robe of skarlet, and his own colour was fayre and ruddy, & he was of hyer stature by the head than any man y^t was there. And whan these knyghtes & barons sawe hym, they had ryght greate joye, and thanked God that he had sente them thither at that houre: & they al sayd vnto hym: Syr, ye be ryghte hertely welcome into this citie of Argence. And Arthur rendred salutation agayne to them ryght swetely. Than a knight, called sir Robert Ardur, who was moost hye and puyssaunt both of ryches and of hauour of all thō knyghtes that were there pertaynyng to the lady, stept forth, and sayd: Syr, it is giuen vs to knowledge, how y^t ye are in mynd & wyll to helpe and ayde my lady that is here present: therfore, syr, we would fayne knowe your mynde in this case, how ye are purposed for to do. Sir, quod Arthur, vereli I am in ful purpose to jeopard my bodye & life agenst this dukes neuwe, and to proue how y^t trayterously he hath slain this ladies father, & falsly disherited her. Than syr Robert sayd: Syr, God giue you grace and power thus to do; for, syr, this dukes neuwe is ryghte fierce and fell: how be it, he is in the wronge, and we in the ryght; therfore, yf God be pleased, he shal be confounded: and, syr, we saye vnto you, wee be all gentylmen and burgeyses pertaynyng here to my lady, and we faythfully promyse you both ayd, and our persons, and also of oure goodes, though we lese our heades in the quarel: &, syr, of thys mynd both we & al our men be of, & we lacke nothyng but a capytayne: therfore, syr, doubt nothinge; for if the dukes neuwe

moue any stryfe, ye shal haue moo than xxx. thousande fyghtyng men. Fayre lady, sayd the mayster, ye shall haue muche noble people. Truely, syr, sayd she, that is trouth, for they loued ryghte well their lorde that is dead.

And as they thus talked, there passed by them a great rout of horsemen, and so they went to the wyndowes and beheld wel knightes & other in the strete on horseback, to the numbre of v. hundreth persones: and in the first fronte there was the Duke of Bygor, & sir Isembart, his neuw, who were ridyng to go mete the Kyng of Orqueney, who as thā was coming to the citie: but his comyng was for Arthurs sake, & not for the dukes; but the duke knewe not that: and the duke had puruayed the kynges lodgyng at the bysshops place, and had puruayed for Philyp, Duke of Sabary, in the Abbey of Saynte Germaine. And soo whan he had mette the kyng, he welcomed him into y^e citie, and so rode forth together and passed forby syr Emeryes lodgyng. Than syr Brisebar, as he stode lokyng oute of the wyndowe, espyed where there rode by the Kyng of Orqueney, syr Artalde, syr Morant, syr Olyuer, and syr Vicier. Than Brysebar, as loude as he could, cryed: Arthur! Arthur! wherwith the kyng and al that rode by loked vp towarde the wyndowe, & there they saw syr Brisebar, and syr Neuelon, the senesshal, & maister Steuen, and Arthur, who semed to them to be a man of gret valure: and anon the kyng dyd cast in his hert how y^e it was Arthur. Than he called to him y^e Duke of Bigor, and said: Syr, I pray you go to your lodging, for I wyl take my lodging at this hous. Thā the duke wold haue descended with him, but the kyng in no wise wold suffre him. So than the duke & his neuw departed, as they y^e wist ful lytel why the kinge & al tho knightes were come to that citie. Than the kyng toke w^t him Philip, his neuw, & the archbishop, and syr Anceau, and entred into syr Emerys house, and caused the gates to be closed after them, and sent al his houshold to the bisshops place: and syr Philip sent his to the Abbey of Saynt Germaines. Than sir Brysebar, and the mayster, and other of theyr company, ran to the kyng, and enbraced him and al his felowship. And than Arthur came before the kyng, and

dyd put of hys bonet, and dyd salute him. And y^e kyng toke him by the hande, and Brysebar tolde the kyng in his eare, how that it was Arthur. Than the kyng sayde: Myne owne right dere frende, Arthur, ye be right hertely wel mette here in the land of Argenton, as the knyghte that I haue most desyred to se and know: for certainlye I had not come hither at this tyme, but all onely to speake with you. A! syr, sayd Arthur, ye haue done your pleasure to trauaile your selfe right sore, to come hither to se so simple a person as I am.

Than the kyng entred into a lytel chaūbre, and there dyd chaunge him: and whā he was redy, he came again into the hal, and there found al the barons & knyghtes together, and Philip, Duke of Sabary, was talking wyth Arthur. Than the kyng layde his hande on Arthurs sholdre, & sayd: Good frende, I praye you that fro hens forth ye wyl be of my houshold; and that ye wyl take of my gyfte, robes, horse, and harneys; and I promyse you faithfully that I wyll be to you a good frende: & so you and I shal be good companyons and frendes. Syr, sayd Arthur, I thanke you: for truely I am yours in al places, & at your cōmaundement wherso euer I am. But, syr, and it please you, I haue offred alredy to my lady Florence my seruice, doughter to the mighty King Emendus, at the request of syr Brisebar: and, as he hath reported to me, her grace hath excepted my seruice. And so, sir, than I haue al redy a maistres, & loth I were to displease her grace. In y^e name of God, sayd the kyng, ye say ryght well, for I repute her companye and myne as all one thing. And, good frende, beholde there sir Phylp, my neuw, Duke of Sabary; verelye I loue hym intierly: therefore I requyre you let him and you be companyons & frendes, and eche of you to loue other. Syr, sayd Phylp, as God helpe me, I promyse him fro hens forth faythfull loue and amitie; nor I haue nothing but he shall be lorde thereof. In al places, and against all persons, except you, mine vncl, I shall be redye to ayde and succoure hym. Right dere frend, quod Arthur, God, that all thyng fourmed, rewarde you. And, syr, I am and shall be your knyghte agenst all the worlde, excepte my ladyes grace, who hath retayned me. All thys is but ryghte,

sayde the kynge, and thys pleaseth me ryghte well. Than the kynge toke Philyp by the hand, and sayd to Arthur: Dere frende, here I put intoo youre hand & keping, Duke Philyp, my neuewe. Loo! syr, here take him to you. And also, neuewe, I put into your hand thys knight: in lykewyse take him to you. Than these two knyghtes enbraced togyther, and promised eche other faythful cōpany. And sir Emery was gladde bycause that he had lodged in his hous suche a cōpany of noble men, that hys herte laughed for joye. And al the other barōs of the cyte beheld meruayllously Arthur, and praysed hym moche in theyr hertes. And than the vylayne, who was in the company with the lady, cryed as lowde as he coude: He is come that shal giue lyght! And the kynge and al other dyd laugh at him right hertely.

Thā the tables were set vp, & water was brought forthe. Than the kynge sate downe, & Arthur by hym, & than the bysshop & Duke Phylp: & so they were serued ryght rychely, for syr Emery made them chere w^t all his herte: & whā dyner was done than they all entred into a fayre gardyn; & there were togyther y^e kyng, & Arthur, the lady Margarete, & the archebyssshop, & other, to the nombre of vi. persones: & al the other company were w^tout wyth sir Emery: & they talked all of Arthur, & sayd, how y^t he had of God a ryght great gyft, for he was both fayre & of noble maners, & had acheued suche aduentures as were gretely to be doubted: how be it, they sayd he had enterprysed a grete thyng, to moue ony warre ayenst the Duke of Bygor & hys neuewe. Syrs, sayd Brysebar, doubt nothyng of hym, for I knowe well he hath acheued often x. tymes a greter enterprise than this is. And as thā the king helde the lady by the hand, & sayd: Fayre lady, behold here your knyght, who I thiike shal do you good seruice to morow. Syr, sayd the lady, I pray to God send him good grace and fortune. So they were thus longe talkynge togyther tyl it was time to go to their restes. Than euery man departed; and the kynge, Arthur, Phylp, and mayster Steuē, lodged al togyther in one chābre. And the lady departed into her chaumbre, ryght joyous of her good aduēture that God had sent her, and all that nyght she slept but lytle for joye, but was

alwayes in her prayers, thankyng God and besechyng hym to be ayde and socour to her champyon; and in lykewyse dyd syr Emery and al other of the cyte.

CAP. LXV.

HOW THAT THE NEXT DAY THE MAYSTER ANSWERED FOR THE LADY, AND ARTHUR TOKE HER QUAREL IN HAND AYENST THE DUKES NEUEWE, SYR ISEMBARTE.

IN the mornyng the kinge and Arthur rose, and all other barōs and knyghtes of the cyte, & went and herde masse; & after masse they range the comyn bell of the towne, and therby assembled all the comynthe of the cyte togyther before syr Emeryes hous, to thentent to kepe this knight Arthur, that the duke nor none of hys shuld do him ony hurt or treason: and the same daye there came to syr Emeryes hous al the kinges power, and al syr Phyllyppes strength, and all other knyghtes pertaynyng to kyng Emendus, who were com thither to se the batayle betwene Arthur & the dukes neuwe. Thā the king entred into the hall; & there was Arthur, & mayster Steuen, syr Phylp of Sabary, syr Brisebar, syr Artaude, syr Olyuer, & syr Vyceer, & also the ladi Margarete; & there they deuysed how they shuld be demened in y^t journey. Thā the Duke of Bygor sēt to sir Emeryes house, cōmaūdyng hym that he shulde incontīnēt bryng the lady Margarete w^t hym to hys courte: & also the duke caused to be cryed throughtout al the cyte, y^t on payne of deth al the nobles of the cyte shuld come to the court to make theyr homage to his neuwe, syr Isembarte. And whan the dukes messengers had shewed the lady how that she shulde come to the courte to thentent to be maryed, thā the maister answered, and sayd: Syrs, shew vnto the duke your lord, how that shortly she shal come to the courte, & there do euery thyng as

she ought for to do of reason. Than departed the messengers, & wente to the duke & his neuewe, & shewed them how y^t the lady was not vnpuruayed of good counseyle, for all the knyghtes of the cyte were in her cōpany, and moo than v. C. other, & all the moost parte of al the comyns of the cyte: and also they shewed how there was a knyght wyth her who wolde mayntayne her quarell. And whan the dukes neuewe herde that, his hert mounted in pryde, and said: What knyght is that? for certaynly yf he medell ony thyng wyth y^t mater, I shall hange hym by the necke, & therfore he is but yll come to be of her counseyle. Howe be it, there is an olde proue that sayeth, oftentymes he wanteth of hys wyll that folysshely thynketh, and so fared it by this dukes neuewe; for or it was nyghte he was in a greater balaunce of jeopardy than this knyght was, for he left his life to pledge. Than the kyng and Phylp wente into the palays, and the duke and hys neuewe dyd encountre them, and so broughte them into his courte, and there in the open hall they sate theym downe. Than anone after came the lady, and Arthur on her one syde, and the mayster on the other syde, and all the other noblesse and burgeyses & comyns of the cyte dyd enuyron them; and soo thus they were a great company, & entred into the palays. And whan the kynge sawe her he rose, and soo dyd the duke; but hys neuewe, of proude herte, sate styl, and wolde not rise; whereof he was moche blamed of euery parson that sawe him. And whan the people were all sylence, than mayster Steuen sayd to the duke: Syr, ye haue commaunded here our ladye Margarete, that she sholde come to your courte: syr, beholde here she is, to know what is your pleasure & wyl. Than the dukes neuewe, as he that was fel and full of pryde, rose on hys fete, and sayd: Syr clarke, we haue nothyng to do wyth you, therfore be ye in peas, & let vs alone. Sir, said the maister, for a poore clerke I am reputed with thē that knoweth me; and as for that I have sayd is for this lady, & I thynke she wyl auowe my sayenge: howe saye ye, madame? be ye pleased that I shal speke for you, or not? Certaynly, sayd the lady, I wyll holde ferme & stable all that euer ye haue sayd, or shall saye: and as to

you, syr duke, I requyre you doo me ryght this daye : and yf ye wyll not, here, in open audyence, I put bothe me and all my goodes and londes into the handes of the Kynge of Orqueney, and of syr Phylp, his neuewe, Duke of Sabary, who are bothe here present. Certaynly, fayre damoyzell, sayd Duke Phylp, doubte ye nothyng that ony body shall doo you wronge, where as I am present. Well, madame, sayd the kynge, and I receyue you wyth a ryght good wyll into my handes, syth it is your pleasure so to put your selfe. Than the Duke of Bygor sayd : Damoyzell, I shal do you ryght ; therefore, mayster, speake ye on, and shewe what ye wyl in this ladyes behalf. Syr, sayd the mayster, I say howe that ye, and your neuewe, haue sente for my lady Margarete, who is now here presente : therefore, yf it please you, shewe vs what is the cause. Than the dukes neuewe, syr Isembart, sayd : Syr clerke, I shall shewe you y^e cause : it is so, I am fully purposed to gyue her in maryage to a barboure of mine. And also, here openly I straitly cōmaund al the noble men, & burgeyses of this citie, & of al the lond of Argenton, on payne of lesynge of their landes, that incontinent this same day they come & do theyr homage to me as to their chief lord and gouernour : & they that wyll not do thus, I forbyd them their heritages that they holde, & not to be so hardy as to entre into it any more. Than the mayster sayd : Syr, than we parceyue wel what good ryght ye wold do to thys ladye, yf there were no knyght y^e wolde answer you : how be it, I wil not spare to speke accordyng to right : Syr duke, it is of troth that all the comentie of al the lond of Argenton, as well all the noble men & burgeyses as the comen people, haue herde and seen, and are well assured, that syr Vicier, sometime lorde of al the londe of Argenton, was rightfull heyre ; & this noble lady Margarete, here present, was lawfully descended of hym, as she y^e is rightfull heyre of all the herytage and goodes pertaynyng to her sayd father : and therefore, syr, as wel all the hie barons of this cite and londe of Argenton, & knyghtes, and burgeses, as wel other meane people, as wel as suche as be here present as they that bene absent, reputeth, taketh, & holdeth her for theyr natural lady, as she y^e is the ryghtfull heyre of all the londe of Argenton.

Furthermore, syr, I saye that syr Isembarte, your neuwe, here present, is in mynde wrongfully, without cause, to dysherite this lady of her propre herytage, and hath already put out al her offycers, & hath set in theyr stede seruauntes of hys owne: therefore, syr, we desire you that al this ladies londes may be delyuered agayn to her, and that she maye be recompensed for such wrongs as she hath had: or elles let hym shewe a lawfull cause why that she should loose her londes. Syr clerke, sayde syr Isembarte, I wyll shewe you no cause whye: but I wyl kepe it whether she wyl or not. Sir, than, said the maister, here lacketh ryght: but, syr duke, as ye be a ryghtfull judge, let vs haue right here this day. Thā the duke sayd: What, fayre neuwe, ye muste nedes tel the cause why ye would holde her heritage. Wel, syr, sayd he, syth it pleaseth you, I wyll shewe him the cause. Syr clerk, I say it is so, y^t the father of this lady, for y^e gret loue that he had to me, after that we were ones accorded together before the duke here, my vncl, than at the last it fortun'd so y^t a greuous maladye toke him, y^e which sicknes cost hym his life; & or he died, because of the good company that I kept him, and for the entyer loue that he had to me, he gaue me generally all his londes, without reseruyng of any thing to him self, or to any of hys; and so gaue me hys gloue in recorde of full possession therof: & know well this lady is his doughter: how be it, her own father did desherite her, and not I: how be it, her father desyred me that I should make her a nonne, and to gyue her xxx. pounce of yerely rent to fynde her wythall: but because that her father loued me so wel, and because it is an hard thyng for to make a younge lustye damoysel a nonne, for oftentimes suche are afterwarde dysmayed, for it is harde to resyst agenst nature; therefore, in eschewyng of suche inconueniences, I purpose to mary her, & assigne to her C.C. pouñd of yerely rent: wherfore I wyl y^t she shall make her homage to me, as to her chiefe lorde. Than the mayster sayd vnto y^e duke: Syr, I shal make sufficyent answere in thys case: but fyrst we wil haue assuraunce of hym, y^t for whatsoeuer be sayd, he shall moue at this time no strife therfore; and my ladye here, for her

part, in lykewyse shall make you assuraunce. Why, said sir Isemberte, who is here that wyl be pledge or medle for the ladye? Than syr Philyp, Duke of Sabary, stepte forth and sayd: I am here present, who wyl be pledge for this lady; & in like wyse sayd moo than v.C. other barons. Wel, sayd y^e Duke of Bygor, and I wyll be pledge for my neuewe. That is sufficient ynough, said the master: Syr, truly than I shal answere you, and saye, that where as youre neuewe sayth, that this ladies father had a great sicknes: whereto, syr, I answere & saye, y^t your neuewe here, syr Isembarte, dydde murther and slee hym, and all hys, falsly by treason, lyinge in a wayte for hym by the waye, by a prepensed malyce, wythout any defiaunce, cause, or occasiō gyuen on his part: and forthermore, where as he sayth, that he is in possessyon of al the landes of Argenton, the whych is of trouthe, but that is by fraude; for he kepeth it falsly w^tout reason or ani cause. Syr, yf he wyl knowledge him self of the murther of this ladies father, and how that wrongfully he holdeth her land: sir, in this ladyes name I require you, and so do we al, that we may haue right iudgement of hym; and that it may be done to hym as it oughte to be done to a traytour, murtherer, comen thefe, or robber. And, syr, if he deny all this, suffre this lady to proue al this to be of trothe, by her knight, who is here present by her, & redi to maintayne her quarell body to bodye agenst your neuewe, syr Isembarte.

And whan the remnaūt of the ladies barons herde the maister speake so boldely, eche of them dyd poynt on other, & sayde: This mayster doubteth lytell the pryde of syr Isembarte; who, whan he herde him selfe called to his own face, murtherer, thefe, & robber, he was so ful of felony, y^t he blusshed for dispite, & closed his fyst and stept forth, & thought to haue stryken the mayster w^t a knife y^t he had in his hande; but the people departed them. And whā Arthur saw that, he layde his hand on his swerde, he sayd: Syr, fayre & easely, I wold counsayl you; for be ye in certain, that yf ye laye any hand on him, all the worlde shal not saue your lyfe. Than the greate vylayn begā to cry iii. times: He is come that shall

gyue lyghte! Than the Kynge of Orqueney laughed at the vylayn. And whan Philyp of Sabary saw Arthur moued, he stept forth, & mo than v.C. with him of knightes, and enuyroned the lady and Arthur, about to ayd and to defende them yf nede were. Than tydynges ran abrode in the cite, how that Arthur was likely to be slayne in the palays: wherfore thither came rūning al the hole comente of the citte, & brast open the palais gates, & thought to haue slayne bothe the duke and his neuw: but the King of Orqueney, wyth muche payne, apeased y^e people: til at the last a seruant of the dukes came to hym, and said: Syr, do ye right to these folkes, or els ye are but dead & al yours; for all the comente of thys cite are here without in your palays, & hath broken open youre gates; therefore dele wisely, I rede you. And whan the duke herde y^t, he doubted hym selfe greatlye, and woulde fayne that he had bene at home in his own coūtry. Than Arthur saide to hym: Syr, it is of trouth al y^t the mayster hath sayde of your neuw; how y^t he is a murtherer, traytour, thefe, & robber: here is my gage to proue it true; my body agaynst his in mortal batayl for this ladies sake. Thā the vylayne began to crye as he dyd before, as though he had bene wode: therw^t Arthur caste downe before the duke hys gloue. And thā the duke answered, & sayd: Syr knyght, ye speke ryght largely: I wote not what moueth you thus to do: but I praye you refrayne your wordes: yf so be y^t my neuwe hath done ony trespasse ayenst this lady, I am puyssaūt ynough to make her suche amendes, that she shal holde her well content: and I praye you, fayre damoyzell, put all this mater in to my handes, & I promyse you I shall soo do y^t ye shal be wel content. Syr, sayd the mayster, ye are a ryghte wyse and a sage prynce, and are wel worthy to gyue coūseyle in many great maters. Syr, ye maye gyue good counseyle in thys matter, yf it please you to doo as I shall shewe you. Your neuwe dyde stryke of, by treason, this ladyes fathers heed: & if ye wyl, therefore, stryke of your neuwes heed, & gyue it to this damoyzell in recompence of her fathers heed, than she shall be content: or elles she shall be defended by her knyght. And whan syr Isembarte herde all y^t, he was soo

sore chawed wyth yre, y^t he said y^t there sholde neuer be made none accorde in that mater, but al onely by the swerde. And whan y^t I haue vanquysshed thys knyght, I shall hange hym by the necke; and shall brenne this clerke & damoyzell in a fayre fyre. Than he dyd caste downe his gage: and therto he was well couseyled by hys knyghtes; for they beleued veryly, that there was not in all the worlde soo good a knyght as he was. Than the vylayne cryed out: He is come that shall gyue light! Than the maister sayd to the duke: Syr, do as ryght requyreth: receyue these gages. And so, wyth great payne, at the last the duke toke them vp: and than the batayle was judged to be incōtinent the same daye.

Than syr Isembarte went to arme hym: & the lady ledde Arthur to syr Emeryes hous, & there his knyghtes dyd arme hym. And the mayster sayd to hym: Syr Arthur, bere thys daye in this mortall batayle your whyte shelde. And he answered, & sayd: Yf God be pleased, I wyll not bere it for fere of one knyght, nor yet for two such as he is. Than it was knowen throughtout al the cyte, how their lady was armyng of her chāpyon at syr Emeryes hous; & how y^t the batayle was judged to be the same day. Than al y^e belles in euery churche began to ryng, & all y^e people of cyte, & of y^e coūtre, besought God to helpe & socour Arthur: & all the processyons of the cyte assembled them togyther, with theyr relyke, & crosses, & holy water, and chanons, preestes, & clarkes, in copes of golde & sylke, & all barefoted, praying to God for theyr ladyes champion. And all these processyōs came & mette Arthur in the strete; who, as than, was mouēd on hys horse, & Phylp, Duke of Sabary, with him, and more than v.C. other knyghtes in his company. And whan Arthur sawe these processyons, & the bysshop mytred and all barefoted, hys herte lerned and wepte for pyte; & dyd lyght of hys horse and kneled downe: & there the bysshoppe dyd sense hym, and blyssed hym wyth the crosse; and Arthur dyd kysse it, and enclyned his heed downe, and the bysshop dyd gyue hym hys blessynge, and sayde: That Lorde that was nayled on the crosse, be your ayde & socoure thys daye & euer. And all

the knyghtes and other answered, & sayd, Amen. Than the processyons retourned agayne to theyr churches: and Arthur and all his company mounted agayne on theyr horses; and soo thus he was brought in to the felde. The hole clergy of all the cyte were on theyr knees makynge theyr prayers to God, that he shoulde that day be helpe and socoure to theyr lady, & to her champyon. Than the Kynge of Orqueney came to the felde, and cōmaunded his neuewe, syr Phylp, Duke of Sabary, to kepe the felde, soo that there should no wronge nor treason be wrought there that day. Than syr Phylp armed hym selfe; and toke in his company syr Brisebar, sir Neuelon, syr Ancean, syr Artaude, and wel to the nombre of v.C. knyghtes of the courte of Kynge Emendus. Thā the lady came to the feld with mo thā a M. of her men wyth her. Than syr Isembart was armed: and as he passed forby the people, euery mā sayd: Go thy way; we praye to God that thou maist dye an euyl deth. And whan he was in the felde where as Arthur abode for hym, than the maister sayd to the duke: Syr, a mortall batayle ought not to be done without an othe. Than the duke caused to be brought forth a relike, one of the bones of Saynt Vyncent, and an arme of Saynt George.

Than Arthur toke his othe, and sayd: By these glorious sayntes relykes that be here presente, and by all the other sayntes of heuen, syr Isembart, the Duke of Bygors neuewe, who is here presente, murthred, or caused to be murthred falsly and without cause, the lorde of Argenton, father to my lady Margarete here present, and wrongfully he wolde dyscheryte her: and therwith he kyssed the sayntes and bokes; and soo lepte vp on his horse as lyghtly as though he had ben but in a jacket; and soo set him selfe aparte, and stretched hym on hys horse. And all that regarded hym sayd: Beholde the hye countenaunce of yonder knyght; se howe he dresseth hymselfe on his horse and plungeth downe his shelde: and the kynge and other also dydde well beholde hym, and praysed hym in theyr hertes aboue all other knyghtes that euer they sawe. Than syr Isembarte toke his othe, and sayd: That, as God and the holy sayntes myght helpe hym, he neuer slewe the lorde of Argenton, nor neuer thought it: and than

he wolde haue kyssed the sayntes, but he myght not : and in hys rysynge he had suche a payne in the heed, that almoost therby he hadde loste his syght : wherfore all the people that sawe hym, sayd : This knyght hath but an euyll countenaunce ; it semeth he is in the wronge. Than he lepte vpon hys horse ryghte heuily ; and Arthur was redy on the other parte of the felde. Than the Duke of Bygor prayed syr Isembarte, his neuewe, that he wolde leue the batayle, and sayde howe that he woulde make the peas and accorde : but in no wyse he wolde do soo ; but sware that he wolde neuer make no peas tyll that he had the heed of hys enemy, and the lady brente. But many folkes thynke to do many thynges, the whyche the hurte therof lyghteth on theyr owne neckes ; and so it dyd on hym. And whan that the duke sawe that he coule make no peas, he commaunded that they shulde doo theyr best. Than bothe the knyghtes let theyr horses renne with great randon, and strake eche other with great and myghty speres : & bothe knyghtes were of great force : and they encountred soo rudely, that bothe theyr speres all to sheuered to theyr fystes ; and they russhed soo togyther with theyr bodyes and helmes, that they fel downe bothe to the erth. But Arthur, who was the more lustyer knyght, quykely lepte vpon his fete, and drewe out Traunchefer, his good swerde. And all that season syr Isembarte laye styll on the earth, his fete vpwarde & his head downewarde. And whan Arthur sawe that he laye soo vneasely, he stepte to hym and lyfte hym vp, and layde his shielde vnder his head, and withdrewe hym selfe a lytell from him : wherfore he was greatly praysed of the kyng, and of all the other people. And the kyng sayde to his neuewe : Syr Philip, it semeth wel thys knyghte hath a ryghte noble and a gentyl hearte. Verely, sayd the Duke Philip, it can be none otherwyse but that he must nedes be extraught of a noble blode ; for there is in him no touch of shame or vylanye. And whan syr Isembarte was reuiued out of hys traunce, he start vpon his fete, and toke his shelde to him, and drew his swerde, and came vnto Arthur and gaue him a gret stroke on the shelde, and strake away a great piece of his hawberke ; and the stroke dyde glyde downe to the earth. Than he said to Arthur : Ye made me righte

now to fall in a slepe; but, or it be night, I shall make you to slepe in such a wise, that ye shal neuer wake. Than Arthur answered him, and sayde: Syr, ye promyse very muche, but I can not tell you whether ye shal be able to paye it: and therewith Arthur strake hym on the helme wyth suche force, that he bare away a gret piece therof; so that one of his eares might wel be sene: than he caste his shielde before hym, and Arthur gaue him suche another stroke, that he claue his shielde asunder in the myddes; and the stroke dyd glent by his arme, so that the bloud folowed: and wyth the same stroke the swerde entred into the earth nye a foote: and all the people that sawe that stroke sayde: Saynte Marye! what knight is yonder! who maye sustayn his strokes? there is no knight like hym: and truelye so he was, as than, the best knyght of all the worlde; for he was of that condycyon, that the more he had to doo, the more hardynes was in hym, and strength. And whan syr Isembarte felt hym selfe wounded, he strake Arthur on the helme; so that it entred til it came to the coyfe of stele, and than the stroke dydde glente downe towarde to the lyft syde, and strake awaye as muche of the hawberk as it touched; but it came not nere hys flesshe: for in certayne, yf that syr Isembart had ben a true and a faithfull man, he had ben a right good knight; for he neuer founde hys matche before that tyme: but, as than, he had to do with him that abated his pryde. Than Arthur strake him on the helme, and claue asonder both helme and coyfe; and so as the swerde tourned, it carued awaye one of his eres from his head, and a gret piece of the browne of his sholdre, and part of hys harneys iuste vnto the bare rybbes. And all thō that saw it, sayd: Jesu! how may any suche strokes be gyuen of any knyghte lyuyng? And whan syr Isembarte felte him selfe so wounded, he was enraged for yre, and sayde: Vassayle! me thynketh ye haue founde me; but, by all the Sayntes of Paradise, I shall reuenge me! Than he lyft vp his swerd, and strake Arthur on the shield soo, that he bare awaye a great piece of hys harneys. And whan Arthur felt the stroke so heuy and puissant, he stepte asyde, as he that was bothe stronge and lyghte, and well and warely he put the stroke by: the whyche

was nedefull; for yf the stroke had light vpon hym ful, by lykelyhood he had ben ryght sore wounded. And than Arthur began for to waxe angry, and toke hys swerde in hys hande with great yre, and dressed hym toward syr Isembarte, and strake him so rudely, that he strake away arme, and shouldre, and all the flesshe of hys syde vnto the bare rybbes, and dyd cutte his legge nye cleane asonder in the thycke of the thygh; and yet, for all that, the swerde entred into the earth halfe a fote. Than syr Isembart fel down to the erth: & Arthur stept ouer hym, and poynted his swerde towarde hys vysage, and sayd: False recreant knight! without thou wylt make open knowledge of thy defaute, I shall put my sward into thy head. Than he cryed Arthur mercy, and sayd: Free knyghte, slee me not; but sende for myne vncl, and for the lady Margarete, and for all the other barons, & than shal I shewe you all the case. And whan they were all come, than he sayd: Damoyzell, certaynly I slewe falsly, by treason, your father, and wrongfully, without a cause, haue disheryted you; wherfore I rendre agayne to you your lande, and crye you mercy in that I haue trespassed to you. Than answered the damoysselle, & said: Syr, God do iugement to you for his part; for as for me, nowe haue I but ryghte, that ye be in this case that ye be in. And whan the duke herde that, he desyred the damosell for Goddes sake to pardon him and to saue his lyfe; for he hath loste an arme and a legge, and I require you let that suffyse at thys tyme. Fayre ladye, sayd Arthur, howe say you? haue I done ynough at thys tyme, or elles shall I do anye more? And euer syr Isembarte laye styll, and euer cryed for mercy, and sayde: I yelde me an recreaunte, and vanquysshed lyke a traytour & murtherer. Than the duke kneled downe before the lady, & helde vp his handes, & required her that he myght haue his neuewe in the same plyte as he was in. And whā the cōmen people of the countrey saw the duke desyre the ladye to pardon hys neuewe, they were in greate feare leaste that she would haue graunted hys request; wherfore a great company of them rusht into the prese, tyll they came there as syr Isembarte laye styll, and they all at ones layd on hym in suche wise, that they left no ioynt together

wyth other. And whā the Duke of Bygor sawe that, he was afrayed of hym selfe, and so toke his hors and fledde his way homewarde into hys owne country as fast as he might. Thā the Kyng of Orqueney sayde : Madame, God and this knight hath thys day done you great honour. And than syr Philyp demaunded of Arthur howe that he did? Syr, sayde he, ryghte well, I thanke God. Than al these lordes & knyghtes mounted on their horses; but the lady & muche other people wente barefoote vntoo the great cathedrall churche of the citie, and there she rendred thankynges vnto our Lorde Jesu Christe: and wythin a lytell whyle after, Arthur, and syr Philyp, and all other lordes and knyghtes, came thyther on pylgrimage: and than the bishop and al the hole clergie receiued Arthur wyth solempne processyon; and soo, for great ioie, all the belles of the citie were ronge thre dayes togyther; and all the burgeses throughout euery strete where as Arthur should passe, did hange oute of theyr wyndowes and on theyr walles, cloth of golde and of sylke, and rych carpettes and cushyns, and couerings of grene, & riche aparayle of eme- rines lay abrode in euery wyndowe; and fayre ladies and damoselles beholdyng Arthur theyr champyon. And whan y^e lady had done her prayers, she yssued oute of the mynster. Than began iuglers, and tomblers, & mynstrelles to make great ioie and sporte. And the kyng led thys lady on the one syde, and Duke Philyp on the other syde, and so led her forth to the palays; and all the other barons broughte forth Arthur: & as he passed throughout euery strete, burgeyses, & ladyes, and damoy- selles, for ioie, dyd cast at hym floures of pleasure, & sayd: God encrease in you bouē & honour. And the great vylayne ran, euer dauncyng before for joy, and cryed: Euer now darkenes is tourned to lyght. And whan the kyng had brought the lady to the palays, he sayd: Nowe, fayre lady, ye be welcome home to your owne ryghtfull herytage. Syr, sayd she, God graunte you y^e hye ioie of heuē, and kepe and preserue my good knyght y^e hath delyuered me fro mine enemies, and saued my lond. Thā anone after Arthur entred into the palays, and the master and al other lords and knyghtes w^t him. Thā the ladi said to Arthur:

Gentyl knyght! ye haue delyuered to me my londe, the whych was lost as to my vse, for I had nothyng therof; and now I haue it agayne by your noble prowesse; wherfore I holde y^t I haue of God and of you: wherfore I wyl to you make faythful homage, & take you for my lord: the whiche knowledge I wyl make here openly before al the nobles y^t be here present. A! madame, sayd Arthur, for Goddes sake say ye neuer so to me, for that shal ye not do. Syr, said she, ye haue giuen it to me, & of you I holde it: I am but a woman alone, & am in purpose neuer to be maryed, seyng y^t my lord & father is deed, the whiche I thanke myn enemyes; but now they haue suche rewardes as they haue deserued: and I know wel, as soone as ye departe out of this coultre, the Duke of Bygor wil assayle me agayne in the reuenging of his neuwes death, and, yf he can, take away from me y^t ye haue giuen me. Fayre lady, sayd Arthur, I promyse you I shall helpe you to kepe your ryght to the best of my power: and whā so euer, and as often as ye send to me, I shal leue al thinges & come to you where so euer I shall be. Sir, said the lady, God gyue you a C.M. thankynges: but, syr, I swere to you by the faith that I haue borne to my lorde and father, y^t I wil kepe no fote of londe of y^t ye haue gyuen me, without I make to you homage therfore. And whā the king herd that, he said to Arthur: Sir, take her homage, syth she will nedes do it: and in like wise counseyled him Duke Philip, and maister Steuē, and many other; and at last, w^t moche paine, Arthur toke homage of the lady, and of diuers other barōs of y^e londe. Thā began there to be made great feest and ioye: and sir Emery, Brisebar, & Artaude, were gouernours of the feest & triumphe. And whan the mete was redy, thā water was brought forth, and so ther wasshed the king, & the bisshop, and the lady Margarete togyther; and thā Arthur, and Duke Philip, and maister Steuē; and so al other, and euery mā after his degre: and so they were all in as great mirthe & ioye as coulde be deuysed: the whyche ioye endured but a lytle season; for all their ioy was soone tourned into great trouble: for all the courte was in great displeasure, as ye shal here after, who lysteth to rede or here therof.

CAP. LXVI.

HOW THE SAME SEASON, WHILE THE KYNGE OF ORQUENEY & ALL THESE OTHER NOBLE PEOPLE WERE AT DYNER IN GREAT JOYE AND MIRTHE, THERE CAME IN A MESSENGER FRO THE WOUNDED KNYGHT TO ARTHUR, DESIRINGE HIM TO COME AND HELP HIM, OR ELS HE WOLDE WYTE HIM OF HIS DEATH: WHEREW^t ALL THE COURTE WAS SORE TROUBLED, AND CEASED ALL THEIR JOYE, FOR THE LOUE OF ARTHUR: FOR INCONTYNENT HE DEPARTED FRO Y^e COURT, AND WENT FORTH W^t THE MESSENGER; & HOW Y^t ALL THE COURTE FERED GREATLY ARTHUR FOR THAT ENTERPRYSE, FOR THERE WAS NEUER NON THAT EUER RETURNED AGAIN ALYUE FRO THAT ADVENTURE.

As this noble courte was in this forsaid great joye, and whyle y^t they were at dyner, there entred in to the palays, on horse backe, a squyer, hys swerde gyrt aboute hym, w^t hys hatte in his hande. And whan he approched nere to the table where as the king sate, he began to crye as lowde as he could: Where is the knight that is called Arthur of Brytayne? yf he be in this courte, let hym answere me. And wyth those wordes all the courte was in peas, soo that euery man might well here hym. And whan Arthur herde how that he demaūded so for hym, he answered, and sayd: Frende, yf ye demaūde for Arthur of Brytayne, there be many folkes reputeth me to be the same: therfore, beholde I am here redye; for I am the same man that ye demaunde for: saye what ye wyll. Syr, sayd the squyer, I am sente to you; therfore ye shall here what I shall say. Syr, it is of trouth, how that my mayster, syr Octhebon of Hurtebise, hath hearde tydynges of you and of your aduentures: and so hath he done of many other that could do hym no good. Syr, this knyght is very seke in his bodye, for I thinke verily he is nere to his deth: therfore he sendeth to you by me, that incōtinent, without ony lenger delaye, that ye come to hym & gyue hym helth, accompanied al onely but wyth your

squyer; & yf ye doo not thus incontynent, through your defaute he shall dye: of the whych deathe, I here, in his name, appele you before the kyng and all this noble court. And than Arthur aunswered hym, and sayd: Frende, howe is it so that I shoulde gyue hym helthe? I am but an yll physycyon to helpe hym that is so seke as ye speke of. Syr, come on your way, and he shall shewe you all the maner of his sekenes. Well, sayd Arthur, thynketh he than that I can gyue hym ony good cōseyle? Ye, syr, said the squyer, if ye be of that hardines and valure as it is of you reported. Well, frende, sayd Arthur, suffre than tyll to morowe, and I shal this day take my leue of all these barons, & so folowe you. Syr, sayd the squyer, are we now in Brytayne? Yf ye wyll go, come on your waye streyght, for I wyll departe: how be it, I wyl that ye know that my sayd mayster appeleth you of hys deth. In the name of God, sayd the Kyng of Orqueney, of an yll deth I praye to God that he may dye; for he hath caused the deth of many a noble knyght, and soo he wyll do now of this knyght, & soo shall we lese hys company. Truly, quod Brysebar, wolde to God I had here his head! Thā the squyer answered the kyng, & sayd: Syr, if I myght answeare a kyng, I wolde saye, that ye should not curse my mayster before me. And as to you, syr knight, that would haue my maisters head, ye wold not go & seke to haue it for your weyght of fyne golde: ye wold fain haue it so it myght cost you nothing; but ye were neuer so hardy to go seke for it: the cause is, ye durst not. And as to you, syr knight Arthur, ye cause me to tary here ouer longe: eyther come on your way, or els abide here still. And so the squyer was goyng hys waye.

Than Arthur stepte fro the table, and demaūded for hys harneys, and sayd, that al the world should not cause hym to tary any longer. Than Arthur went & armed hym, and came agayne into the hall, and sayd: I wyll departe; & so toke his leue of the kinge and of al the hole barony, who were right sorowfull of his departyng. Than sir Philyp, and moo than v.C. other knyghtes, would haue gone w^t hym; but the squier, messenger, wold not suffre any creature to depart with him but al onely Bawdwyn, hys squyer. Than maister Steuen came to Arthur, and sayde: Syr,

ye go in a great aduentur of death, for your return is ryghte jeopardous; but yf God gyue you that grace to retorne, leue ye for nothyng, but that ye come to the tourney before Cornyte at Bartylmewtyde nexte comynge: for there shall I be, and my ladyes pauylion with me. I wyl now retorne to the Porte Noyre, & I shall sende Gouvernar after you. Certainly, maister, said Arthur, if God wil that I shal escape this aduenture, I shall be at y^e sayd tournay: wherfore, as now, to God I cōmaunde you. And so mounted on his horse, and toke with him his white shield, and Clarence, hys good swerde; the which were ryght nedeful to him in that journey: & so he rode forth, and Bawdwyn, his squier, with him. Thā was al the court sore troubled for his departynge. Than the kinge cōmaunded to take vp the tables, & to trusse all his stuffe, for he said he wolde depart incontinente. Than the ladye Margaret had thought to haue caused him to tary, but she could not in no wise. And soo in the same houre he departed, and al other lords & knyghtes: so y^e there abode with the lady Margarete no moo but her own knyghtes. The mayster also sayd, that he would go to y^e Port Noyre.

And whan all the courte was departed, the maister came to the lady, & sayd: Madame, wyl ye comaunde me any seruyce vnto the Markes, your vncl, who is at y^e Porte Noyre? And the lady desired hym to tary two or thre dayes, tyl suche time as she had set all her londe in some good ordre, & than she promised to go with him to the Porte Noyre to se her vncl: y^e whyche request the mayster dyd graunte her with al his herte, for he loued her entierly, & had set al his heart and loue on her: how be it, she knewe it not as than. Than the lady ordeyned her bailiuers, and prouostes, & other officers & kepers of her londs, bi the aduise and good cōsail of the mayster, and receiued homage of al her people: and there she made syr Emery principal gouernour aboue all other. And whan she had ordeyned al this, thā she toke her horse and xii. of her knyghtes with her, and so rode forth with the mayster to se her vncl. And as they rode together, y^e mayster dyscouered to her all his courage, how that he loued her with perfit and faithful honest loue: with the which wordes her hert

was so fyred, y^t fro that time forward she loued him entyrelly, and dyd nothyng but after hys counsayle, and promysed to owe him her good wil & fauour. And so at the last they aryued on a Saturday at the Porte Noyre. And when they were come thyther, there mette them Gouvernar & Jaket: & so the maister & Gouvernar toke down the lady. Than Gouvernar & Jaket demaūded how that Arthur did? And the maister answered, & said, how that he was in good helth & mery, & how y^t he was as thā newly departed to the castel of Hurtbyse, in y^e countre of y^e lost yle; & shewed him how that he desired that he should come after hym; wherof Gouvernar had great ioy, and departed the next day. And whan the lady sawe Gouvernar so byg and so goodly a knight, she demaūded of y^e master what knyght he was? And he answered her, & sayd, how y^t he pertayned to Arthur. In the name of God, said she, I think it right well, for he semeth to be of hye prowessse. Verely, madam, said he, & so he is.

Than Gouvernar toke the lady, and led her into the palays. Than the Markes came forth the same time and met them, who knew nothyng before of her comynge. And as sone as she saw her vncl, her hert trembled whan she remembred the deth of her father: & so she ran & embraced hym, wepyng both for ioye and for sorowe: for ioy that she saw her vncl, & for sorowe of the remembraunce of her father. And whan the Markes sawe her, and knewe wel y^t she was his nece, incontinente he remembred the deth of her father, his brother; with the which remembraunce his herte closed in suche wise, that of a great space he could speke no word; and so sate them downe on a benche. And whan the lady could speake, she said: Fayre vncl, & dere frende! I neuer sawe my dere father sythe he departed wyth you: I praye you tel me whether ye haue sene him or not: I pray you answere to me a pore orphelyne bothe of father and mother. And whan her vncl herde her saye soo, hym thought his herte dyd breke for sorowe, and sayd: A! myne owne nece, & dere loue! bothe ye and I haue lost hym; and ye are disherited: therfore we ought wel to complayne on oure damages. And, syr Isembart, I pray to God thou maiest dye an yll deth, y^t hast thus brought vs into this dolorous

chaunce. Syr, sayd the lady, of an yll deth he is dead. And so was about to tell him all the matter, but she could not for wepyng. Than the mayster came to thē, and shewed the Markes that Arthur had conquered syr Isembarte in playne batayl, and had rendred to y^e lady agayne her londes; and how that she had made homage vnto Arthur. Thā the Markes sayd: Certainly, fayre nece, ye haue done ryght wel to make hym homage; for he hath deliuered vs out of pouertie, & hath made vs ryche, and he hath wel aduenged you of youre mortall enemy, and he hath deliuered me oute of the dolorous pryson that I was in: wherefore, yf euer I may se hym agayne, I wyl become his man. Thus they talked together so long, that at the laste the mayster made theym to forget theyr sorowe, and to be ioyous & mery. And so they went to dyner, & were serued right richely: and so al y^t day they wer together. And thus this lady abode a great space at the Porte Noyre, and euery day sported with her vncle: and so they made right great ioy and feast together.

CAP. LXVII.

HOW Y^e GOUERNAR, IN SERCHYNG OF ARTHUR, HAD THE HONOUR OF A TOURNEY Y^t WAS MADE BY Y^e ERLE OF THE YLE PERDUE, & THERE GOUERNAR WAS AMOROUS OF THE COUNTES. AND HOW Y^t THE ERLE CHARGED THE COUNTES Y^t SHE SHOLD NOT SPEKE TO GOUERNAR, WHEROF EUYLL CAME TO HYM; FOR THE NEXTE DAY GOUERNAR DYD BEETE HYM WELL IN THE TOURNAY, & LAY ALL NIGHT AFTER WITH THE COUNTESSE, HIS WYFE.

IN the mornynge betymes Gouernar toke hys leue of the lady, and of the maister, and of the noble Markes, and rode forth on his waye, and Jacket, hys squyer, wyth hym: and he was ryght rychely beseen, and mounted on a good and puyssaunte horse;

and soo rode forthe viii. dayes, and neuer coulde here anye tydynges of that he sought for: tyl at the laste he aryued in the londes of Ynde the More, bytwene the realme of Soroloys and the empyre. And there he sawe a great ryuer; & at a crosse waye he encountred a messenger, who bare a scochyn on hys brest, & also a boxe full of letters, and rode a great pace. And this was aboute Saynt Laurence tyde.

Than Gouvernar dyd salute the varlet, and demaunded of hym what tydynges, and of whence he was? And he answered, & sayd: Syr, I am pertaynyng to the Erle of the Yle Perdue, and am rydyng to the stronge castell to a knyght named syr Jakes, to thentent y^t he sholde come to him to go w^t him to a tournay: for themperour of Ynde hathe somoned my maister, y^e said erle, to wayte on hym to Cornyte at this Bartylmewe tyde nexte comynge, bycause of a turnay that is taken there bytwene hym & the mighty Emēdus, Kynge of Soroloys: and bycause my lord thynketh not to be vnpuruayed of good knyghtes, he hath made to be cryed a tournay on Mondaye next comynge, to thentent to chose of y^e best knyghtes y^t cometh thider, to haue them wyth hym to the sayd great tournay at Cornyte: therfore I must go to the sayd syr Jakes, to cause hym to be wyth my said lorde on Monday nexte comynge. Well, good frende, sayd Gouvernar, go on your waye. God sende you good aduenture! So than the varlet departed.

Than Gouvernar sayd to Jacket: I am in purpose to goo to thys sayd turnay, for it may happe ryght wel that we may there here some tidinges of my lorde Arthur. And so they rode so longe, tyll at the last they aryued at the Yle Perdue; where as they founde many knyghtes y^t were redy come, so y^t all the lodgynges were taken vp; wherfore he had moche payne to gete hym ony lodgyng; but, at the laste, he mette w^t a good burgeyse, who receiued hym frendly into his hous. And whan Gouvernar was chaunged, he called to hym hys hoste, & demaūded hym all the maner of the erle, and what maner of man he was? who answered, and sayd: Syr, he is a ryght valyaunt man, & a hardy knyght; for there are but fewe that may compare wyth hym in dedes of armes: & he hath to hys wyfe the moost fayre lady that is in all

the worlde, except the Kyng of Soroloys doughter; & for her beaute hyther resorteth many straūge knyghtes, both dukes, erles, and many other good knightes: & bicause he dooth tournay to morow, he knoweth well y^t many knyghtes wyll be at hys house for to se his wife, therefore he hath caused the gates of hys castel to be fast shette; and hath defended, that what so euer he be shal not entre: the gates were not open syth none yesterday. No! sayde Gouvernar; in the name of God I shall assay to entre, &, yf I can, to se the fayre lady. Than he called to hym Jacket, and cōmaunded hym to brynge forth hys horse: for he sayd he wolde go & assay his horse ayenst the nexte daye that he sholde tournay. And so Jacket brought hym his horse, & he mounted theron; and so rode forth throughout y^e stretes of the towne tyl he came to the castel gate, the which he fōud fast sbette. And than he bad the porter to open the gate, for he sayd he wolde entre into the castell. And than the porter demaūded of hym, what he had to do there? Frende, said Gouvernar, I wold speke with the good lady of this place. Veryly, syr, sayde the porter, ye may not entre in at this place, for my lord hath defended the contrary; for he hath cōmaūded y^t what so euer he be y^t cometh hyther, that none shoulde entre: wherfore I dare not lette you in. Yes, I pray you, sayd Gouvernar, and I wyll gyue you what soo euer ye wyll demaunde of me. Than the porter opened a lytel wyndowe, & there he sawe y^t Gouvernar was a ryght goodly knyght, & browne of vysage; & sawe how y^t he rode on a maruayllous fayre horse. Than thought he well y^t he was some noble man, & sayd to hym: Syr, yf ye wyll gyue me the horse that ye ryde on, I wyll open you the gate. Open the gate than at ones, and I gyue hym to you. Syr, sayd the porter, wyll ye promyse me, as ye be a true knyght, that I shall haue hym? Veryly, I promyse you that ye shall haue hym, as I am a trewe knyght. Syr, sayd the porter, I pray you tary a lytle whyle, & I shal go in & speke wyth my lorde. Well, sayd Gouvernar, I praye you hye you agayne as faste as ye may. Than the porter went to the erle, & sayd: Syr, there is at youre gate a maruayllous fayre knyght, who hath so great desyre to se my lady, y^t he wyll gyue me hys horse that he rydeth on, the which

is wel worth, by lykelyhode, a C. pounde, on the condycyon that I wolde open the gate & let him in : therfore, syr, pleaseth it you to shewe me your mynde in this case ? How so ! said the erle, my minde was, that none should entre into this place : howe be it, I wyl not that thou shouldest lese thy gyft that he wolde gyue the, therfore goo thy waye, & open the gate, & take thy horse. And thā he sayd to the countesse, his wyfe : Madame, yonder is a knyghte that hath gyuen a ryche gyft to se & to speake w^t you : wherfore I charge you, as dere as ye holde my loue, that whā he is come ye make to him no maner of semblaunt, nor speke no worde to hym, what so euer he saye to you : yf ye doo otherwyse, ye shall ryght sore dysplease me. A ! syr, sayd the lady, for Goddes sake I axe mercy. Syr, we knowe not what knyght he is, nor of what valure : and yf he haue gyuen a ryche gyfte to speake with me, he shall haue but a small rewarde for hys curtesy yf I shoulde kepe my speache from hym. Ayenst loue no man can be, and I am a gentylwoman of great power : therfore I should greatly trespace and I should not speke to him yf he speake to me. By the fayth that I owe vnto God, said the erle, if ye trespace agenst my commaundement, I shall dysplease you at the herte rote. Wel, sir, sayd the lady, for your loue I am content ; but yf any vylyny growe therby, I praye to God it maye fal on you.

Than the porter opened the gate to Gouvernar : and there the porter toke his horse, and Gouvernar wente forth into the palays a fote ; and the erle, and such other knightes as wer with him, mette Gouvernar, & dyd salute hym, & behelde hym maruaylouslye ; and soo he passed forthe tyl he came where as the countesse was. Than he wente to her, and sayd : Madame, God, that all thynges fourmed, gyue you thys daye, helth, ioy, and peace ; and blessed be the renowne y^t rūneth of your valure, boūte, and fresh beautye : for now I se wel it is of trouthe, and more thā is, or can be reported. And whan the countesse herd hym, she answered no maner of worde, the whiche greued her ryght sore in her herte ; and therwith she cast downe her loke toward the earth. And Gouvernar made countenaunce to salute the other ladyes ; and so sate downe amonge them. And at the last he sayd to the



Our Heath direct



countesse: Fayre ladye, I am a knyght that passeth throught this coutry, and it was shewed me how that ye were in thys castell: wherfore I thought I would not passe by without seyng of you; therefore I am come to you, to offre my selfe to be your knyghte, & to do that I may do for your sake: wherfore, madame, I requyre you to shewe me what is youre pleasure, for I am sore desyrynge to knowe it. And the countesse spake no word agayne, but cast down her loke to the grounde, wherwith she was ryght sore greued at the herte. And whan Gouvernar sawe that she spake no worde, he was ryght sorowfull, & sayde: Madame, wyll ye not speake to me? I haue herd renowned of you, that ye were fre & gentyll of hearte, and of suche courtesie, that ye could beare none yre nor no malice in your herte, nor do any vylany to any maner of persone: wherfore, fayre lady, aunswere me some maner of worde. How be it, for al that, she spake no worde agayne. And therwith water was brought forth, and all they wasshed, and sate downe to dyner. And the earle caused Gouvernar to syt nexte to the ladye, to thentente to doo hym the more anoyaunce and shame. And there Gouvernar carued to the lady ryght goodly with his knyfe, and oftentimes spake to her, but she woulde neuer gyue answere agayne: wherewith Gouvernar was so sore displeased, that he neyther dyd eate nor drynke but a lytel; for he sawe well how the lady spake to all other, but in no wyse she would speke to him. And also the countesse was right sore displeased in her hearte, because she durste not speake to him. And thus they were in thys case tyl they were taken vp fro y^e diner. And than Gouvernar toke her boldly by the hand, and sayd: Madam, I wold fayne speake a lytell wyth you. And soo he led her vnto a fayre wyndowe. Than he sayd: Swete lady, it is for none yl, or despite, or for any trespase, that I haue made to you or to anye of yours, that ye do to me suche hardnes y^t ye wil not speke to me: ye haue the name to be the moste free and gentyllest of hearte of any lady now lyuynge, for al bounte and courtesy is sayd to be in you: therfore, swete lady, shew somewhat of your courtesy to me as in speakynge but one woorde: and, fayre and gentyl ladye, do me soo muche honor as now to speke to

me ; for, as God helpe me, I am ashamed, if ye do not, for euer : for it shal be sayd to morow of me, how that I am but a folysshe knight and outragious ; for by myne outrage, it shal be sayd that I haue loste the herynge of the speche of the moost fayre ladye of the worlde : madame, I requyre you put fro me this reproche : open to me a lytle your swete mouth, wherein is all curtesy, and speke to me some worde : for, madame, as God helpe me, my herte dyeth in my body, for I am in fere leest that ye be dyspleased wyth me for some trespase that I haue done : but for al y^e she spake no worde agayne to hym, and yet she was as sore greued in her herte as he. Gouvernar stode and talked so longe to thys lady, tyl at the laste two of her gentylwomen came for her, that she should go into her chambre and take her reste. Than Gouvernar, at her departynge, layde hys arme aboute her, and sayd : Madame, I se well I must nedes departe from you at thys tyme : I wyll go to my lodgyng ryght sorowful, and ye shall go & reste you, & slepe, & take lytell care for my greate grefe : how be it, madame, I saye vnto you, that I wyl neuer departe fro this towne tyll ye haue spoken to me. And so, thus talkynge, he brought her to her chambre doore, and he sawe well where there was a waye out of the chaumbre in to a fayre orcheyarde. Than he sayd : Madame, ye wyll not speke to me ; but I promyse you I wyl come this same nyght in yonder orcheyarde, & soo to your chaumbre, to speake with you, thoughe I dye therfore. Syth I haue taken that enterpryse in my mynde, eyther I wyl dye, or elles ye shal speake to me. And therwyth the countesse entred into her chaumbre wythout spekyng of ony worde to hym.

And than Gouvernar retourned to hys lodgyng into the towne, ryghte sore dyspleased in hys herte. And whan Jacket sawe hym come on fote, he demaūded of hym where was hys horse ? And he answered, & sayd : In fayth, frende, it gooth not wel wyth me. Ha ! ha ! sayd Jaket, I trowe ye haue played away your horse, bycause ye woulde not tournay to morowe with the knyghtes of this countre. Well, shamefull knyghte, to morowe, whan I se other gentyl knyghtes tournay, I shall shewe them how that ye lye aslepe in your chaumbre. Than Gouvernar layde hym downe on

a bedde, all replete w^t yre, tyll it was nyght. And than the sayd erle cōmaunded all hys knyghtes, that they should departe and goo to theyr restes, bycause they shoulde be trauayled on the next daye. And also he sayd to the countesse, hys wyfe: Madame, go thys night into your chaumbre and take your rest, for I wyll thys nyght ly alone; for I am sure I shall be ryghte sore trauayled to morowe. And whan it was derke nyght, and the coūtesse taken her leue, and entred into her chambre, than rose Gouvernar, and badde Jacket, his squyer, to gyue hym his swerde. And Jacket demaunded of hym what he wolde doo? I wyll go out & playe me, sayd Gouvernar. By the fayth that I owe to God, sayd Jaket, I trowe ye wyll go lye in a wayte by the hye way, for to robbe some marchaūt to by you a newe horse wyth all. Gouvernar answered no worde agayne, but departed fro hym; and as than euery bodye was in theyr lodgynges, for it was than somewhat late, and the moone shone very bryght, and the watchemen were on the walles of the castell, and so wente often aboute. And at the laste Gouvernar came to the hygh walles of the orcheyarde, the whyche joyned on the one syde toward a fayre forest. And there Gouvernar sawe well, on the other syde, the wyndowes of the chaumbre where as he sawe the lady entre whan he departed fro her. Than he clam vpon a grene oke, and dyde so moche, that at the last he gate vpon the wall: & there he stode styl pryuely a good space, because of the watchemen that went about; for, as than, they were in that quarter. And whan they were passed, he gate hym downe by another tree; and so stode styll by the walles, vnder the shadowe of the trees; for the moone dyd hym grete anoyaunce, because she shone so clere. And at the last he gate hym into the myddes of the garden, vnder a fayre pyne tre, where as there was a ryght fayre foūtayne: and there he stode a great space, & durst not stere for feare of spying; for he knewe well, that yf he styrred, the watchmen, who as then were not a slepe, should se hym; and he knewe well that, and he were espyed and taken, he shoulde notte lightly escape wythout deth: therfore he kepte hym selfe as pryuely as he coulde.

And al thys season the countesse was in her chambre in her

kyrtel, barefoted and bare legged, and on a carpet of sylk, and her damoysselles aboute her; and there they began to speake of the knyght who had gyuen hys horse to speake wyth her: and one of the damoselles, who was named Poncet, sayde, howe that he was of right great valure and bounteful of hert. By the mother of God, said Eglentyn, an other of her damoysselles, ye saye ryghte truly; and where as he is gentyl of hert, in lyke wyse he is passynge fayre, and more gracious of wordes than my lorde is. Truly, sayd Poncet, I meruayl me greatly, how that my lady could haue so harde a heart, as whan he spake so swetely to her, that she woulde gyue hym no maner of answer. Truly, sayd Eglentyne, as I remembre I hearde hym saye at hys departinge, that he would come thys same nyght into thys garden. By the good Lorde, sayde the other, I remembre well I hearde hym say so. Well, sayde the countesse, I care not whether he come or not; yf he doo, lette hym kepe faste that he shall wynde: lette vs go to our beddes: & that she sayd to couer her courage, and to breake theyr wordes: and so she sente awaye from her all her gentyll women, sauynge Poncet and Eglentyne, for they two were of her preuy counsaile. Than she sayd to them: A! dere lady, the mother of God! what shall we do yf this knyght cometh into the garden this nyght? yf he be espyed of the watchemen, it shall be thoughte that I haue caused hym to come hyther; soo shall I be shamed, and he destroyed; the which should be a great damage; for he is a right fayre knyght. By the good Lord! said Eglentyne, madame, ye say ryghte truly: therefore, Poncet, felowe, let vs twaine go se whether he be come or not. Than Poncet toke a grene mantell and dyd cast it on her, and so went forth together playeng, to the entente the watchmen should knowe that it were they: and, at the laste, Poncet lokyd vnder the pyne tree, and there she sawe where he stode. Than she sayde: Sister Eglentyne, there is no more but now let vs do for the best, for yonder I se hym: and incontynente they approched too the fountayne, and made semblaunt to wasshe theyr fete and handes; and Poncet toke her mantell and dyd cast it on the knyght, and toke a fyne keuerchefe and dyd knytte it on hys heade; and so toke hym by the arme, & did

leade hym forth into the countesse chaumbre, as though he had ben one of her felowes. And as sone as Gouvernar sawe y^e ladie, he cast of his keuerchefe & his mantell, & kneled downe, & sayde: Madame, I pray God gyue you good lyfe and good nyght. And she answered, and sayd: Syr knyght, in an yll nyght and tyme ye be entred into my chambre without my licence; wherfore ye be not welcome vnto me: but, for your labour, I shall cause you to be hanged by the necke: and these wordes she spake fayre and easely, because she wolde not be hearde. And forthermore she sayde: Syr knyght, howe durste ye be so bolde to breake my walles & entre into my chambre? By the mother of God, ye shal dye therfore. Than Gouvernar answered, & sayd: Ryght dere and swete lady! blame me nothyng therfore; for, as God helpe me, my herte dyed in my bodye whan so hye a lady as ye be wolde not speke to me: for, as it is sayd that all goodnesse and gentylnesse is cōprysed in your persone: wherfore, fayre lady, now doo wyth me what it shall please you: syth ye haue spoken to me, stryke of my head & ye wyll: loo! here it is al redy: and so he layde forth his heed to the cōtesse, to haue had her stryken it of yf she lyst. And whan the countesse saw him humble himselfe so mekely, her hert began to melte, & so toke of him some pyte. A! madame, sayd Poncet, this knyght hath euyl employed his curtesye that he hath done to your porter, as to gyue him hys good horse for youre loue, and nowe ye to speke so rudely. He hath done more bounte and curtesy, syth he came hyther, than euer dyd onye that euer came vnto this place to se you, though they were neuer so noble or great: it is reason that he may fele that he hathe not yll employed his gyft that he hath gyuen for youre sake: and also he hath ieoperded hys lyfe in this behalf: it came of a great gentilnes of herte to gyue awaye his horse, and of a great valure of courage to put this his lyfe in aduenture for your sake: full lytell durst thus haue done ony knyght of this countre, who be afrayde of euery foly: they lacke in theyr hertes suche boūte and valure. I say not all thys all onely for his sake, for I neuer sawe him afore this daye: but, as helpe me God, I se by reason y^e loue hath caused hym thus to do; for yf he had not

loued you, he wolde haue done nothyng of thys y^t is done : therefore, madame, for Goddes sake make hym amendes of the yll cruelte y^t ye dyd to him this day, & speke to him more curteysly. Poncet, sayd the lady, I can not, I am so full of yre ; for he hath dyspleased me with his cominge hider : for it is no thanke to him though I wer shamed for this dede. Madame, sayd Poncet, yf ye put hym out of your chaumbre at this time of nighte, he shall be espyed of the watchemen, & so taken & slayn, & you shamed ; for euery man that shal knowe therof, wyll saye that ye caused hym to come : & the more that knoweth therof, the worse it is ; for whan a thyng is doone, it is conuenient to let it passe as easely as may be, and to kepe it secrete ; for all is lytle ynough. Syr knyght, knele ye downe and crye my lady merceye, in that ye be come hither without her lycence. Than Gouvernar kneled downe, & sayd : Madame, for Goddes sake forgyue me this trespase. And she beheld him meruaylouslye ; for he was fayre & gracyous, and he was bare heded : & Poncet strake dowe hys heare wyth her hande, for it was somewhat ruffled wyth the wynde, and sayd : A ! madame, beholde & se what maner of knight this is : and who is soo harde herted that wyll not forgyue hym that putteth hym selfe in suche aduētūre, all onely to se a fayre noble lady ? Certaynly I pardon hym in your name ; for I am sure, madame, ye wyll be content therew^t. Than the countesse dyd smyle, & sayd : Alwayes ye wyl playe the fole : but so she toke Gouvernar by the hande, & caused him to aryse vpon his fete. Than Poncet bad hym syt downe by her lady ; but, for courtesye, he would not at the fyrst biddying. Than Poncet sayd : Syr knyght, now ye nede not to take any care for anye of the knightes of this castel for your coming hyther ; and without ye haue fere of a womā, syt down by my lady, and make your own peace. Therw^t Gouvernar sate down, and enbraced and desyred the ladye yt she wold pardon him : and so she did. And than Gouvernar, all smylyng, cast forth many prety & goodly wordes ; and euer he fōūd the lady gentyl & swete of her answeres. Than Poncet said : Sister Eglentine, my lady, me thinketh, is mery now : I trow she care not for vs : let vs go watch in y^e next chaumbre, for I thynke she would fayne be a

bed; and soo they wente theyr way: and the lady called them again, but that was very softly, for it was with a dead voice. And than anon Poncet herd the curteyns drawen about the bed, and she knewe well there were no mo creatures but the lady and the knight together. Than Gouvernar began a lytel to speake fayre, as these louers dothe whan they would haue their desyres; and at the last he dyd so muche, that they were agreed to lye together; and so to bed they went: and there they toke suche pastaunce together, as these louers are wont to do whā they be in lyke case. And than Gouvernar demaunded of the lady, why she had done hym so much vylany, as in that she would not speake to hym in her palays? In the name of God, said the lady, the cause was, for my lord comaūded me so to do, and I durst not dysplease hym: how be it, that greued me ryght sore so to do. Well, madame, it is often seene, that too much restrainyng is not good; but, as in thys case, he y^t hath the domage let hym wepe hardely: & so he embraced and kissed the lady, & thus they were together til it was nere hand day. Thā the lady said: Syr knyghte, I requyre you rendre vnto my lorde the vilany that he hath done to vs, in suche wise y^t ye iust to morow agenst him; & let him fele and know how that ye be dyspleased. By the mother of God, sayd Gouvernar, so shall I do: I warant ye shal se hym flye to the erth. Thā the lady began to laughe. Than Poncet came to the beddes syde, and sayde: Madame, is all the yll wyll any thyng mynysshed? is all this warre now fayled? I beleue that the peace be made: I trowe ye haue made amendes thys nyghte to the knyght. By the good Lorde, sayd the lady, Poncet ye play alwaye the fole. Up, syr knyght, sayd Poncet, for it is tyme for you to ryse. Than Gouvernar rose & apparayled hym. Than the countesse said: Sir, yesterday ye dyd giue awaye your horse for my sake; wherfore I wyl gyue you agayne as good a gyfte; Poncet, bryng me hyther yonder lytel casket that lieth on my presse. And whan she hadde it, she sayde: Holde, syr knyght, I gyue thys casket to you, and al that is therein. Madame, sayd Gouvernar, by the leue of God I wyll not take it; for I thanke God I am riche ynough, & haue so valyaunt a maister,

that he wyl gyue me goodes sufficyent. By the fayth y^e I owe to God, said the lady, though ye were a kyng, yet I gyue it vnto you; and without that ye take it, I ensure you I wyl neuer speke to you more whyle I lyue: I giue it to you frely, but for a remembrance for the loue that I haue in you, and to bie you therwith a newe horse; and I require you to morow dele w^t my lord as ye haue promised me. Madame, by the fayth that I owe vnto you, sayd he, I ensure you I shall make hym reuerse from his horse. Than y^e lady and Poncet dydde smyle; and so than departed Gouvernar fro them, and toke the casket with him, the which was ful of coyned gold: and as than al the watchmen were a slepe, for than it was at the poynte of day.

CAP. LXVIII.

HOWE THAT GOUERNAR DYDDE BETE DOWNE, AT THE TOURNEY,
THE ERLE OF THE YLE PERDUE.

THUS whā Gouvernar was departed fro the countesse, he came to his owne lodginge, and there he founde Jacket, hys squyer, slepyng on a fourme before the fyre; & so he awoke hym. And whan Jacket saw hym, hys herte trembled because of hys sodayne wakyng, & sayd: Thys is a fayre taryng, I trowe, for a wyse man to come now to his lodgyng; and than he did lyght vp a torche, and there in the chambre Gouvernar did open hys casket, wherein there was of golde and Jewelles beyonde two thousande pound. And whan Jacket sawe it, hys herte was afrayed, and sayd: Syr, I thynke ye haue robbed some abbeye: beware ye be not hanged to morow. A! Jacket, frende, said Gouvernar, holde thy peas; holde here C.C. pound, and loke that I haue to morowe a good horse, and gyue all the remnaunt of the money to poore people. Ye, said Jacket, ye be very liberal of other mennes

goodes, for I trow all thys coste you noihynge : ye be a large gyuer of almes. I thynke it were better that ye caused the abbeye to be couered wyth lede fro whence ye stale thys money. But so than, as sone as it was fayre day, Jacket wente into the market place, and there he founde hys owne maysters horse to be sould : and there he boughte hym for an hundreth pounce, and soo broughte hym to Gouvernar, who was ryghte gladde of hym. And after that none of that day was paste, harowdes did crye in euery strete : knyghtes lepe vpon your horses, and get you shortlye to the fiede. Than hornes, bussynes, tabourynes, trompettes, and claryons, began to sowne maruaylouslye. Than knyghtes quickelye dyd arme theym : and than the gates of the castell were sette open, and the erle dyd yssue out wyth a great company of knyghtes wyth hym, and came into the place where as the turney shold be : and by that tyme Gouvernar was armed and mounted vpon hys horse ; and he was greatly beholden that tourney of euery bodye, for he was a ryght fayre knyghte in harneys. Than the countesse, and other ladyes and damoiselles, were mounted on the castell walles to behold the tourney, the whyche was in a fayre grene, ryghte vnder the castell wal. Than Poncet & Eglentine saw where as Gouvernar came riding toward the tourney, in a narowe lane. Madame, quod Poncet, beholde yonder knyghte, by semyng he sholde be some noble man. Truly, sayd the lady, he is the most semelyest knyghte in all y^e rowte. Madame, sayd Poncet, I thinke ye would his honour and profyt. By the good Lord, sayd the lady, I wold he were a kynge. Than anon in the field the partes were disseuered, & Gouvernar was agenst y^e erle. Than herawdes cried : Knyghtes, do your best. Than began the tourney ryght hard & sharp : & Gouvernar aduysed wel the erle, and ran at him ryght rudely ; and the erle strake hym so sore, that he made him somewhat bowe on hys horse : but Gouvernar strake hym, and mette hym with his bodye so rudely, y^t he made hym auoyde his horse, & the legges vpwarde. Than Jacket toke the erles horse, and brought hym to the countesse for a present. And whan the ladyes sawe where the erle dyd fall, than Eglentyne sayd : A ! yonder is one w^t his fete vpwarde. That is true, sayd Poncet, that is my lord

the erle; beholde how he shaketh his legges. Well, sayd the countesse, me thynketh yonder knyght holdeth my lord very shorte. Madame, sayd Poncet, he acquyteth hym of hys promyse. Thus Gouvernar helde the earle so shorte, y^t he was fayne to yelde hym, whether he wolde or not. Than all the erles company came al at ones on Gouvernar; but he was stronge and lyght, and gaue so greate strokes and heuy, that he confounded all that euer he attayned vnto: and at the bronte he vnhorsed moo than viii. knyghtes. And whan Jacket had made hys present vnto the countesse, who thanked hym moche, than he retourned agayne vnto hys mayster: and soo he hadde ynough to do euer to cary the horses of them that hys mayster had ouerthrowē to the burgeyse, who was hys maysters hoste. Than Gouvernar aduysed well where there was togyther a great flocke of knyghtes. Than Gouvernar dasht amonge them so rudely, that at his fyrst comynge he ouerthrewe two knyghtes togyther; and so wythin a shorte space he departed the knyghtes asonder, and gaue suche strokes all aboute hym, y^t euery man fledde before hym: & all the ladyes sawe hym do meruayles wyth hys handes; & they maruayled howe that euer he coulde endure suche payne wyth his body. And than as he retourned fro that company, he mette agayne the earle, who as than was remounted. Than Gouvernar dasht into the prese tyll that he came streyght where as the erle was, who, as than, handled ryght sharpely a knyght of the parte that Gouvernar was of. Than Gouvernar dressed hym to the erle, and enbraced hym by the shouldres, & dasht hys horse wyth his spurres, and ouerthrewe bothe the erle to the ground, and also the knyght that the erle fought wythall; and there he made the erle to yelde hym agayne. And whan the countesse sawe that, she smyled ryght swetely, and said: Poncet, frende, yonder knyght hath beten downe two at ones; blessyd be hys vertue! he is nowe well auenged of the erle, my husbonde, who wolde not suffre me to speke wyth him. Than the erles company set on Gouvernar; but he defended hym selfe ryght maruaylously: but they oppressed hym soo sore, that hys horse enfoundred vnder hym: and than Gouvernar vygorously lepte on hys fete, and there

he aduysed the erles senesshal, who hadde at that tyme ryght sore anoyed hym; and he was well moūted vpon a good blacke morell horse. Than Gouvernar lepte vp to him, and toke him aboute the necke wyth his handes, and pulled hym so sore, that he made hym to auoyde the saddell, whether he woulde or not, and soo fell to the grounde. Than Gouvernar toke hys horse and quyckely lepte vp into the saddell, and in a greate yre dasht in to the prese, and gaue so myghty strokes, that he made all to flee before hym: and by that tyme the erle was remounted agayne; and the thyrd tyme he came behynde Gouvernar, and embraced hym wyth bothe his handes, to the entent to haue lyfted hym out of hys saddell; but he coulde no more remeue hym, than thoughe he had lyfted at a great toure. Than Gouvernar tourned hym to the erle, and toke hym by the head, and pulled hym downe to hys horse mane, & gaue hym so many strokes, that he all to brused hym: wherwyth he fell downe to the earth in suche plyte, that he coulde not remeue for all the good of the worlde. Than there fel on hym all the earles company: and by that tyme the earles senesshall was remounted; and so he came to Gouvernar, and whā he sawe hym do such dedes of hys prowesse, he praysed hym moche in his herte, and thought to tournay noo more that daye ayenst hym, but sayd: Syr knyght, be ye in certayne, y^e as many horses as fayle you thys day, I shall puruey you euer of an other. Than Gouvernar dasht into the prese, & rounde aboute hym he layde on their heades and vysages, that he made them to blede lyke beestes: & at the last hys horse fayled him; and than the earles senesshall brought to hym an other hors. And whan he was remoūted, he strake in as fresshely among them as though he had done noo thyng of all that day before: and than he dyd so moche by hys prowesse, that euerye man gaue hym place & departed, & left hym in the felde all alone. Thā the erle was borne into the castell in a horse lytter, for he was sore brused. And his senesshall came to Gouvernar, & desyred hym muche to go to the castell; but Gouvernar wolde not, but sayd: What should I do there? I knowe not what maner of people ye be; for amonge you ye dayne not to speke to ony straūge knight. Thā the senesshall wyst well that he sayd that

by the countesse : wherfore he blamed moche the erle in his herte, in that he had cōmaunded her so to do. So than Gouvernar retourned to the burgeyse, his hoste, who made him ryght great chere & feest : and the knightes and burgeyses of the towne came thither to se hym, and sayde one to an other, Beholde here the valyaūt knyght ! Gouvernar had wonne that day xv. good horses : than he vnarmed hym, for he was somewhat wery of his trauayle. And whā the erle was in his castell, he cōmaunded that the gates should be set open, & that euery man should come in, who soo euer wolde : and than he was vnarmed, and the countesse, his wife, came to him, & demaunded howe he dyd ? And he answered, and sayd, how that he was sore brused. A ! syr, sayd she, & who hath done that ? I am right sory therfore. Truly, said he, thus hath arayed me the same knyght that gaue yesterday his horse to my porter, to thentent to se you. Syr, sayd she, I byleue it well ; for I thinke he was dyspleased wyth you bycause that ye forbade me that I shold not speake to hym : I thynke he remembred y^e to daye ; wherfore it is good to be wel warē to whome a man dooth a dyspleasure. Than the erle came into the hall where as all the other knightes were ; and there they were talkyng and enquyrynge eche of other, what knyght had done best that day : and so they all did giue the prayse to Gouvernar. In y^e name of God, said the erle, he hath beten me downe thre times this same daye ; therefore I requyre you gete hym hyther to me ; for I shall acqueynt me wyth hym ; for I wyll gyue hym the one halfe of all my londes, on the condycyon that he wyl abyde & dwell wyth me. Certaynly, syr, sayd his senesshall ; and on that condycyon I wyll gyue him yerely a thousand pounce : for, accordyng to the trouth, he is a ryght good knyght. Than the erle commaunded his senesshall to go for hym ; and so he dyd ; and founde hym at his hostes hous, who made hym ryght great chere and honour. And than the senesshall said : Syr, the erle hertely desyreth you to come and speake wyth hym in the castell ; and, syr, for Goddes sake abyde & dwell wyth hym, and he wyll gyue you the one halfe of hys londes, and I shall gyue you a thousande pounce yerelye, & kepe you true and faythfull company :

&, thus talkyng, they went forth togyther towarde the castell: and as soone as the erle saw hym, he rose vpon hys fete, and so dyd all the other knyghtes, and dydde hym muche honoure: and the erle caused Gouvernar to syt downe by hym. Than these tydynges ran anone into the countesse chambre, how that the good knight was come: than the ladyes had great delyte to se hym. Than Poncet sayde: Madame, I thynk thys knyght pleseth you ryght well; therefore let vs go se hym. Certainly, said the countesse, with a right good wyll: so than they wente into the hall. Than the earle & Gouvernar dyd ryse, and ryghte courteysly dyd salute the lady. Thā the countesse sayd to Gouvernar: Syr, ye shoulde not salute me; for I haue done you more vylanye than euer dyd lady to any knyght without trespas. Madame, said he, it is no trespasse for so hye a lady as ye are, to take her plesure of so symple a knyght as I am. Than y^e erle sayde: Sir, ye haue thys day beten me fro my horse, the which neuer as yet knight dydde before; wherfore I owe vnto you a great raunsome. Syr, sayde Gouvernar, sauynge youre grace, I am not of suche vertue nor of such valure as to do so hie a chyualry as ye speake of. Wel, syr, sayd the erle, I knowe well how it is: but, syr, I require you be of my house, & ye shall be there cōmaunder therof; for I wyll y^t what so euer ye cōmaund shall be done. Syr, sayd Gouvernar, I humbly thanke you: howe be it, I can not accomplysse your desyre: & the more the earle desyred hym, the more he sayd nay. Than y^e erle sayde to the countesse: Madame, I praye you desyre hym; and so she dydde ryghte swetely: how be it, she was not greatlye bound to do so muche at her husbandes desire: but Gouvernar wisely excused him, and sayd: Fayre lady, it can not be; for I haue a lorde already, who must nedes be serued of me, & of other far better knightes than I am. Certaynly, syr, sayd the senesshal, yf there be more prowesse in him than is in you, he surmounteth than all the knightes of y^e world. Certainly, sir, sayd Gouvernar, he is able to caste suche vi. as I am into the ryuer. Truly, sayde the erle, thā do ye well to serue him faithfully; wherfore I wyll requyre you noo ferder: howe be it, that forthynketh me.

Than y^e countesse was right sore displesed because he would not abyde. Than y^e souper was redy, & water was brought forth, and so they sate downe and were well serued. After souper Gouvernar toke lycence of the erle, & of the countesse, & of all other knyghtes: and than torches were lyghted vp, and the senesshal conuayed him to his hostes house: & the erle cōmaunded that his host should take nothyng of hym for his dispenche. Than Gouvernar toke his leue, and the nexte mornyng betimes departed; & commaunded his hoste to God, and gaue him al the horses that he had wonne in the tourney: & the burgesses thanked him hertely, & said: In al places where as Alexander y^e Gret dyd conquere, ye may go w^out ieoperdy, & do as muche as euer he did. And so Gouvernar entred into hys way, & rode to seke his lord Arthur.

Now let vs leue spekyng of Gouvernar, & let vs retourne to Arthur and to the King of Orqueney.

CAP. LXIX.

HOW THAT AFTER ARTHUR WAS DEPARTED FRO ARGENTON TO GO TO THE CASTELL OF HURTBYSSE, TO THE WOUNDED KNIGHT WHO HAD SENT FOR HYM: IN HIS WAY, AT THE LAST, HE FOUND, AT THE ENTRYNG OF A FAYRE FOREST, THRE LADYES OF RIGHT EXCELLENT BEAUTY, OF WHOM THE CHEFE WAS CALLED PROSERPIN, QUENE OF THE FAYRY, WHO GREATLY DESIRED ARTHUR OF HIS LOUE, BUT IN NO WYSE HE WOULD AGRE THERTO; & THERE HE LOST HIS VARLET THAT WAS HIS GUYDE, WHEREFORE IT BEHOUED HIM TO TARYE THERE ALL THAT NYGHT, FOR IT WAS DARK, AND WYST NOT WHYTHER TO GO.

So it was, that when the kyng of Orqueneye was departed fro Argenton, he rode streight into his own country, for to make redi his people to go, at Bartylmewtide, to the turney at Cornite; &





Duke Philip went to Sabary to appaile his people; & syr Neuelon, syr Ancean, syr Artalde, & al the other knightes of Kinge Emendus, returned to the kinges courte: and there recounted the hie prowessse of Arthur; & how he had sped at Argenton w^t the Duke of Bygors neuw; & how that y^e Wounded Knight of the castel of Hurtbise had sent for hym, and how that he was gone thither. Than the kyng was sory in hys herte: for he had great fere of him lest that he should neuer retorne agayne, for he knew wel that many good knightes were perished there. And in especyall Florence was ryght sorowful, for there was none y^e could recōfort her.

And Arthur euer rode forth after the squier, & so rode iii. dayes together w^tout finding of any aduenture. And the iiij. day he rode tyl it was none: and than they aryued at a knyghtes place, who was vncle to the squyer that was Arthurs guide; & there they were wel receyued, and so sat down to dyner, & were wel serued. And whan they hadde dined, than they mounted on theyr horses agayn, & so rode forth tyl it was night: & than they entred into a lytel narow way, betwene a fayre forest & a grene medow; and so they rode forthe wel y^e space of halfe a mile, and y^e mone began to shine fayre & bright, and at the last they came to a way y^e they muste nedes entre into the thick of the forest. And at last Arthur espied, vnder a fayre oke, a delectable place, where as he saw iii. faire ladies, maruelously white and of gret beauty: but she y^e was in y^e myddes was soueraine most fayre, for she al only had more beauty than bothe the other ii., and yet they were as fayre as could be deuysed. And whan Arthur had espyed them, he set his fete to y^e earth, & lighted fro his horse: & she that was in the middes rose whan the other two were vp, & there Arthur saluted thē right curteisly, and they him agayn. And the squier that brought Arthur thither, toke one of the ladies in counsaile: and whā they had talked togyther a good space, they went into y^e thick of the wood, they ii together alone, and were not sene again of al the night. And the other that was in middes, had to name Proserpin: & she toke Arthur and set hym downe by her, and helde him by the hand, & beheld hym faythfully in the vysage, & sayd: Syr, ye

be ryghte hertely welcome. And he answered, & sayd : Madame, I pray God kepe you fro all yll. Syr, sayd Proserpyne, I haue greate desyre to se & speke with you, if ye be he that hath conquered the batayle agenst the Duke of Bygors neuewe. Madame, as God help me, sayd Arthur, I woulde full fayne y^t there were such valure in me as that I might achene suche a dede. Well, sayde Proserpyne, I knowe ryght wel how it is, and also of other of your dedes ; & , syr, ye be in certayne that ryght grete renowne renneth on you, how that ye be free, swete, fayre, & gracyous, & to be a good knyght aboue all other : & as for beauty, I se wel how it is. Well, madame, sayd Arthur, I praye God amende in me that lacketh of that ye speake of. That is wel said, quod y^e lady. Than she layd her hand on his hed, & demaūded of him what was his name ? Madame, quod he, I am called Arthur. Arthur ! sayd she, nowe, and by the faith y^t ye owe to her that ye loue best, & to Saynt George, haue ye any louer yet ? I am sure my demaunde is but a folly : for so fayre a knyght, so yonge, and so valiant in armes as ye, can not be wythoute a louer ; wherfore I am in certayne ye haue one : but I pray you shew me what she is, by the fayth y^t ye owe vnto her, & I promise you neuer to accuse you. And therewith she beheld hym, and smyled a lytel, & said : I pray you speke, and shew me the playnes, by the troth that ye owe to father & mother, yf ye haue any alyue ? Madam, said Arthur, ye cōiure me right sore : therfore, as God help me, I shal shew you y^e troth. Madam, it is so, I can not tell whether y^t I haue a louer or not : but of one thyng be ye sure, I am a louer, for I loue w^t all myne entyer hert. And what is she ? quod the lady, I pray you by the faith y^t ye owe vnto her. As God help me, said he, I cā not tell you ; for I neuer sawe the person y^t I loue. What ! said the lady, thā ye loue, and wot not who ; who hathe set you on this foly ? wherfor loue ye thus ? Madā, quod he, I loue becaus of the gret goodnes & valure y^t is in her, for she is a swete, gracious, & a gentil lady of hert. Why, sir knight, how know ye y^t ? Madam, it hath bē shewed me y^t she is of suche condycions. Wel, quod the lady, what & there haue bē shewed you more thā troth in y^t behalfe, who than shal do you

right? I demaund of you, thinke you y^t al that is said of me and other to be of troth? Certainli, madā; nay, some list parauentur at somtime to speke more than they know. Wel, frende Arthur, quod she, thā ye be but a fole: by my counsail leue suche folly, & lese no lenger your time w^tout reson: ye be now in your youth & in your beuti, wherfore ye shold haue daily your loue in your armes, and lede a louers life in myrth and in solace: and whā it is time to stryke, for her sake, both w^t speres and swords, & cast doune these knightes to the erth by ii. at ones; and leue seruing thus of the muse, or els ye shal be called no more Arthur, but ye shal be called y^t knight that museth: therfore leue this loue; but behold here, and se in your cōpany if there be any thing that pleseth you, chose which ye wil. The squier that brought you hither museth not; for he is w^t his loue, and hath her al this night in his armes: behōld here the cōpany of me, who is right fayre and yonge, gentyl and puissant, holding in mi hand greate heritage: and I am doughter to a king, and both my father & mother dead: and now I am entred into my londe to kepe my relme, which is gret and noble. I am also right yonge, about the age of xvi. yeres, & would loue right wel some gentil knight that wold help me to kepe my lond and relme, and to counsaile me for my wele in al my busines: suche one wold I loue and kepe entirely. Arthur, ye nede not to be deceiued by youre loue, louyng of the muse, & take me here in dede. And whan Arthur herde her, he beheld her wel, and, wyth a gret perfound sygh, sayd: A! dere ladye! as God helpe me, my heart is set on her that I shewed you of, wyth al my faithful loue and thought, in suche wyse, that I am not maister of my selfe, nor my herte is not myne own: for it hath forsaken me for this sayd ladi, so y^t I am no thing lord of min owne hert, nor w^t al the power y^t I haue I cannot withdraw it fro her: for I thinke verily y^t she hath put my hert into her hert, therfore I haue good hope y^t thei shal be good companyons, and faythfull togyther, seyng y^t it wyl not come agayne to me, & leue his swete companyō; therfore, fayre lady, blame me not, though ye loue me, that I do not accōplysshe youre desyre, for, as God helpe me, I can not, for my hearte is not mine

owne : therfore, madame, blame me not, syth my herte hath forsakē me for an other : but, as I be saued, ye be ful gētil and noble, & ryght happy shal he be that shal attayne to your grace : for your beaute is such, y^t euery person y^t seeth you wyll put to theyr payne to seke the wayes to attaine to youre hye loue : for, by the fayth y^t I owe to my lorde & father, I had rather haue your loue, if it myght be, than to be kyng of all Fraunce ; but, by my soule, madame, ye may behold here my body w^tout hert, vyne wythout sauour : a fayre body w^tout loue auayleth nothyng. Wel, frende Arthur, quod Proserpyn, many there be that fyndeth fautes & wyl seke for no remedy : you lay the blame on your hert : suche folkes as wyl not do as they be requyred, cā fynde fables ynough to finde occasion of excuses : ye haue long inused, & yet ye purpose to muse lēger ; hardely loue ynough, & loue there y^t youre dreme & fantasy sheweth you, & therby ye shal haue very moche joy by lykelehode, for your musyng wyl do you moche honoure : by the fayth that I owe to you, I loue my louer faythfully : & I saye it by you, beholde here Arthur who dremeth & museth, beholde here the shadowe wythout the sonne lyght, beholde here the body wythout hert : this is he that loueth & woteth not whō, therfore he is feeted of none : therfore, frend Arthur, take to you the best counseyle y^t ye cā, & God be with you ! Than she rose fro hym, and departed into the woode, & her company wyth her.

Thā Arthur abode ther alone but wyth Bawdwyn hys squyer : for the squyer y^t brought him thither was departed, therfore he wiste not whether to goo. Than Bawdewyn sayd : Syr, as God helpe me, ye ought to be blamed. And why so, good frende ? said Arthur. Sir, bycause this gentyll noble quene that was ryght now w^t you, who is so fayre, so swete, & so gracyous, and she wolde fayne haue had your company & loue, & thus ye to let her depart, and wold not embrace & kysse swetely her pleasaunt lytle mouth ; wherfore, in my mynde, ye are greatly to be blamed : for, as helpe me God, I wolde not hau done soo, thoughe I had lost my head in the payne. A ! good frende, sayd Arthur, and what chere thā shuld the swete Florence haue, and what shulde she set by me, yf I shulde do as muche to another as I shulde do to her yf

it pleased her? What! wold ye haue me to make of my mouth a trayne for euery body, yf she kepe her mouthe close for the loue of me, and I than to habandon me to all the worlde: what honoure than were it to me to be comyn to al the world? what shulde it than be sayd on me? he is but a rybaude. Wel, syr, sayde Bawdewyn, for all that I coulde not haue done so.

Thus they mounted on theyr horses, and entred into the wode, & rode, they wyst not whither, so longe, tyl at the last they loste theyr waye, that they rode they wyst not whyther: &, at conclusyon, they came agayne to the same oke from whens as they wente before: and there they taryed all that nyghte, & laye on the colde earth in the thycke busshe, and tyed theyr horses to a tree.

CAP. LXX.

HOW ARTHUR CONQUERED THE CASTEL OF HURTBYSE, THE MOOST STRONGE PLACE OF THE WORLD NEXT TO THE PORTE NOYRE, WHERE AS WAS THE DAMOSEL BY WHOM THE WOUNDED KNIGHT WAS HURT: AND THERE ARTHUR DYD SO MUCHE BY HYS PROWESSE, THAT THE SAYD KNYGHT RECOVERED HELTH.

IN y^e morning betimes Arthur & Bawdwin rose, & shoke theyr eares to put away the fethers fro their heyre; & so mounted on horses, and found a lytel way, the which brought thē clene out of the forest. Thā Arthur was ryght sore displesed in his mynde, because he had lost the squier y^t was his guide in y^t maner, for he knew not where to fynd hym the hurt knight. And so they rode forth so lōg, tyl they entred into a fayre medow: and than they saw, on a fayre hye mōuntain, standing a goodly castell, y^e whych was closed wyth double walles and gates. And at the fyrst gate there was one that watched the passage for all comers: and as

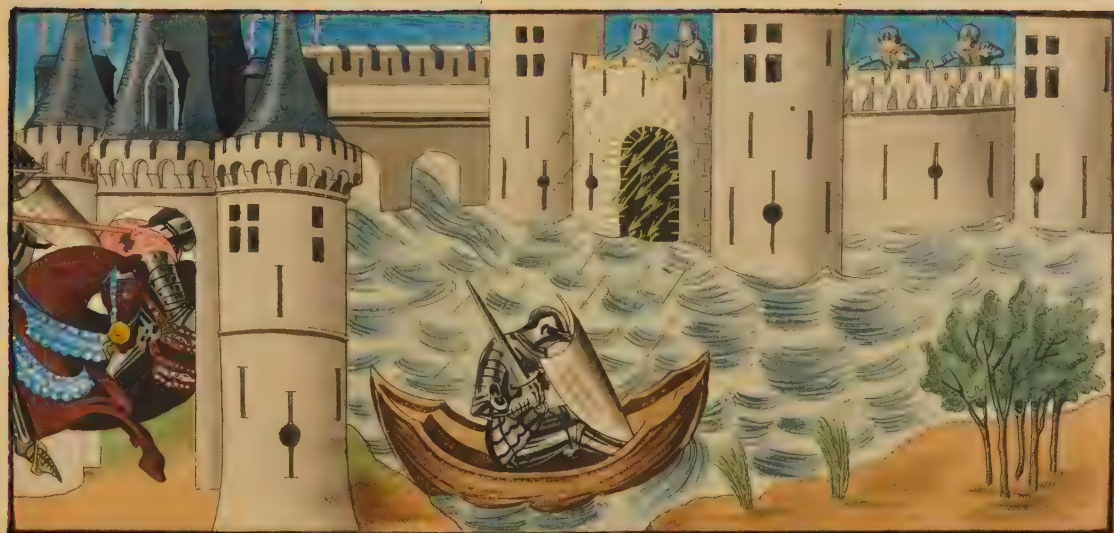
soone as he sawe Arthur, he toke a horne, and blew therin so fiersly, that al the valey ronge therew': and therewith there yssued out of y^e castel a knyght all armed, and well mounted, & he made tokē to Arthur that he should beware of hym. Than Arthur toke his shelde, and florissbed with his spere, and met so rudely together, that the knyghte brake his spere: and Arthur strake him so, that his spere went throughout his body more thā a fote: and so pulled out his spere againe, and dressed hym self agenst an other knight that came rudely at him; and he strake Arthur in suche wise, that his speare brake in the myddes: but Arthur strake him so fiercely, that he ouerthrew both hors & man to the erth stark dead. Than there yssued out of the castel v. knyghtes, and they all ran on Arthur at ones: and Arthur thā toke his sword, and strake so the fyrst, that he claue hys head clene asonder; and the other dydde kyl hys horse vnder hym: but than he set his hand on the hors of him that he had slayne before, and so lept into the saddel: and the first that he encountred loste hys head. And whan the other saw that, they fled away as fast as they myght, and Arthur folowed them: and in hys pursue he slew two of them; & as the fyft wold haue entred in at the castel gate, Arthur strake of hys head clene frō the sholders. Than he entred into the castel; and there he sawe before him an other strong wal, and it was so hye, that it was meruayl; and it was enuyroned al aboute with a greate deepe water that yssued oute of sondrye fountaynes. And as he behelde howe that he might entre into the place, there came to hym the same squyer that caused hym to come fro Argence, and he dyd salute hym. And whan Arthur sawe hym, he knewe hym ryghte well, and demaunded of hym the cause why that he left him in the forest? As God help me, sir, my lady led me forth, and I durst not displese her. Wel, sayde Arthur, and where is the knight that ye sai hath sent for me? Syr, quod the squyer, he is in a chambre in this castel, where as I thinke he shal neuer se to morowe thys tyme; for, syr, ye tary fro hym ouer longe, whych is great synne. Frend, sayd Arthur, I praye you bring me wher as he is, y^t I might speke w^t hym.

Than the squyer broughte hym to the knyght, and Arthur did

salute him. And the knight right piteously, and with a soft voice, said: Sir, ye be hertely welcom. Syr, sayde Arthur, ye haue sente for me: beholde now here I am; therefore shewe me youre wyll. Than the knyght enforced hym selfe to speke, & sayd: Syr, for Goddes sake be ye not dyspleased though ye be come hyther for my sake; for, syr, the seke creature seketh euer for helth; & to y^t entēt, that ye shal be in certain of my sekenes, yf ye be not dyspleased, I shal shewe you all my grefe. Than the knyght vnarmed hymselfe, & layde his body all naked. Thā Arthur sawe on his backe v. greate woūdes, made w^t a knyfe y^t was enuennymed, & thei begā at his sholdres and endured downe to his thyghes; & the woūdes were sore rākled, & of such largenes, that he myght wel haue layde in euery woūde all his arme. And whā Arthur sawe that, hys herte trembled for pyte, & demaunded who had gyue him thō strokes? Certaynly, syr, sayd the knyght, I shall shewe you: It is of a trouthe I loued ryghte hertely a fayre damoyzell, who is ryght noble and gentyl, and she me in lyke case: & whan I might I dyde resorte vnto her; and she is in a chambre aboue in this castel: & at the last thys loue that was bytwene vs was knowen by her frendes, wherwyth they were ryght sore dyspleased; & so laye in a wayte on me at a season y^t I was w^t her: and as I wolde haue departed, they toke me, & haue arayed me, as ye se, w^t enuennymed kniues, so that I can haue no helth; & the damoyzell is fast kepte in pryson, in a chambre here aboue, to thentent that she shoulde not come to me to gyue me health, for she can do me more good than all the creatures of the worlde; and yf I myght haue ony creature that myght fynde the meanes to speke with her, she wolde sende me suche oyntementes, that should make me bothe hole & sounde. And, syr, the vii. knyghtes that ye haue delyuered me of, dyd kepe the gates, to the entent that no surgyen shoulde come hyther to hele me. Syr, I haue ben four yere in this sore tourment that ye se me in, and there is non in all this place that wolde bringe me suche thynges as my ladye & loue wolde sende me, & they wyl suffre none to speke with her fro me, & therfore I muste nedes dye. Well, syr, sayd Arthur, & how should onye body entre into the

castell, syth the gates be shyttē? Syr, sayd the knyght, there is none that can entre at the gates, for they be ouer stronge: but, syr, in the castel dicke there is a lytle shyppe, by the whyche the knyghtes that ye haue slaine were wōt to entre into the castel; & by the shippe ther is a lytle false gate, wherby ye may entre into the castell yf it please you, and so ye may bring fro my lady the oyntmēt that shall helpe me. Syr, sayd Arthur, I shall do my power. And thā he sayde to the squyer: Frende, bring me to the shyp, and I wyll entre into the castell.

Than the squyer brought hym to the shyp, and Arthur entred into it. And thā the shyp went forthe wythout ony maner of touchynge: & Arthur was not gone ferre from the banke, but there came flyenge aboute hym moo than iii. M. quarelles shotte oute of crosbowes; and Arthur sate in the shyp, and couered him with hys whyte shelde, and the quarelles dyd lyght as thycke theron as thoughe it had rayned; in suche wyse, that all the shyppe was rased wyth quarelles: and in this maner he approached to the posterne; & whan he came to the entre, he founde styckynge rounde aboute the gate great longe sharpe speres w^t heedes of fyne stele. Than he toke hys good swerde in hys hande, and layde on these speres as faste as he coulde, and so dyd cut them clene asonder in the myddes; and there he dyd soo muche, that by cleane force he entred in at the posterne: and whan he was wythin, there rose suche a wynde, that Arthur had muche payne to holde hym on his fete: and than there fell so great haboundaunce of raine, that he stode to the mydde legge in water; the whyche water ranne so faste, that he was fayne to staye hym by his spere: for what for the wynd and swyftenes of the water, he had moche payne to stande vpryghte: and at the last, and with gret trauayl, he dyd so moche, that he yssued out of the straytnes of the posterne. And than he herde a thyng make a great noyse in the castel: & therw^t there came on hym at ones mo than v. hundred persones redy to fight agaynst hym: and so they assayled him rudely on al partes, and they did cast at him speres, stones, dartes, and staues, right gret plēty: & he gaue agayne ryght great strokes, & frusshed downe all that euer he attayned vnto: how be





it, y^e prese was so gret, that they caused hym to knele down on hys knees; & there quickly he stepte vp agayn, & dasht in among them, and was right sore chafed: & his strength than began to encrease, & the more he had to do, the more grew his strengthe: & so he cut asonder all that euer he attayned vntoo; and so, by clene force, he drew hys backe backe to a wall, & there rested hym. Thā his enemies ran to crosbowes & to speares, and so charged hym with many gret strokes. And whan he felte hymselfe so sore oppressed, he was sore chafed therw^t; and so habandoned him selfe among thē, & gaue great strokes; for whom so euer he touched, he claue him to the sholders. And than they began to flye before hym, and he folowed them: but he was right sore wery, for they behynd hym dyd him muche payne and tra-uayle. In thys case, thus fightyng, he was fro thre of y^e clock tyl it was none: and thre tymes he was dryuen downe on hys knees, and yet, for al that, euer he rose agayn in the spyte of them all. And as he was thus fighting, at the laste he herde the sowne of a gret horne, aboue in the castel; and as sone as all tho that fought against Arthur herd the blaste of the horne, they all sodainly departed, without any word speakyng: & so there remayned but al onely Arthur, wherof he had great maruayle. Than Arthur dressed hym toward the castell, and entred into it; and so at y^e last he entred into the fayre halles, & there found neyther man nor woman: and than he serched al aboute the place, but he coulde fynde noo creature. At the last he entred into a fair ryche chaumbre, and there he sawe the most fayre and rychest bed that euer was sene, and it was al redy made to lie down therin. Than he approched therto, and sate downe on the syde therof, and his sword in his hande: and than he herd well moche people coming and goyng in y^e same chambre, and herd dores and windowes open and shette, but he could se nothing, whereof he had greate maruayle. And whan he had sytten a good space on the bedde, and well rested him, at the last he saw where there came into the chambre a great company of ladies, and damosels, and knightes, and squiers; and in y^e myddes amonge them he saw where there was a yonge fayre quene, crowned with golde, in a syrcote of

ermynes, and a mantell of vyolet sylke : and she was of right great beauty ; and foure knyghtes ledde her, and shee was enuyroned all aboute wyth other fayre ladyes. And as sone as he sawe her, he knewe well that she was Proserpyn, the quene, whom y^t he found in the forest the nyghte before. And than he rose vpon his fete. Than y^e quene came runnyng too hym, and embraced hym aboute the necke, and sayde : Syr, ye are ryghte hertely welcome into my house. Fayre lady, quod Arthur, I pray to God giue you bothe helthe and moche joy. Arthur, said the quene, now are ye past al jeopardies ; for now that ye be ī my cōpany, ye be in a surete : therfore put of your harneys, for ye shall be in as good surete as myne own propre body. Madame, quod Arthur, I thāke you : how be it, I haue not, as yet, acheued that thinge as I came hyther for ; for here is bynethe in this castell a seke knight, who hath sēt me hither to a damoyssel that shulde giue hym helthe ; & I haue promysed to bringe him that she wolde delyuer me for his helth : therfore, madame, I requyre you, yf she be here in your company, cause me to speke w^t her, yf it please you, & therby I shall accōplysse my couenaūt to the knight. Frēde, quod the ladi, be ye no more dismayed of the knight ; for I promyse you he shal haue helth for your sake, & that right shortly.

Than the quene called to her a lady, who was called Argence. And thā she said to Arthur : Syr, beholde here y^e same lady y^t the knight was hurte for, & it is she that can giue hī helth : therfore, Argēce, I wil that ye go to your knight, & thynke on his helth as a loue ought to do to another. Madame, quod Argēce, w^t a right good wyll ; & as to you, sir knight, I thāke you a hōdred M. tymes, syth that I haue leue to goo to my loue for youre sake : &, syr, ye haue wōne therby of hym to be to you a true and a faythfull knight ; and of me ye shal haue a true seruāūt : therwith she departed. And Proserpyne cōmaūded y^t Arthur should be vnarmed. Than there ran aboute Arthur knyghtes & ladyes ; and one toke awaye hys shelde, an other his swerde, an other hys helme ; and so eche of them layde to theyr hādes to helpe hym. And whā he was vnarmed he stode in his doublet ; & thā the ladies brought him warme water to wasshe his necke, & his

vysage, & hāddes; and thā the fayre ladyes dyd wpe hys vysage w^t fayre whyte kerchefes. Than Bawdewyn came & brought hym his gowne to put on; but y^e quene wold not suffre y^t, for she made hym to put on a grene kyrtell & a syrcote of scarlet: than the quene toke her owne mantel fro her neck, the which was of purple sylke, & put it on Arthur: thā he was so fayre and gentill, that one coude not be satysfyed with beholdynge of hym: for all the ladyes than sayd, how that the knight was a gracyous persone; grete ioye should y^t lady haue, that might haue suche a louer as he was. Than the quene toke hym by the hande, the whiche was a ryght goodly syght to beholde, for they were bothe fayre & yonge: and thus hāde in hand they wente throughout the chambre, talkyng of many thynges: and whan they hadde thus talked togyther a great space, the quene cōmaunded euerye body to departe, & to leaue them alone togyther: & so they did. And than the quene toke hym by the hande, and sayd: Arthur, let vs goo syt downe on yonder beddes side; and soo they dyd: & by that tyme the chambre was cleane auoyded, sauing all onely of Bawdewin, who sayd vnto his mayster, Syr, I thynke it best y^t I go & see your harnes & amend it, for it is ill brused; & it is harde to tell whether ye shall haue any thyng to do shortly or not. And whan Arthur heard him, he wist ful wel what he ment; and therefore he smyled, & so Bawdewyn departed.

Thā the quene sayd to Arthur: Min owne sweete & true loue! I am now wel pacyfied in my hert, now y^t I haue you in my house, as of him in all the woorld that I moost desyre to se & speake withall; & therewith she layde one of her armes aboute his necke, and wyth the other hande she dyd stryke downe his here, & said: Arthur, ye be come to y^e place where as ye be much loued w^t a faithful hert: wherfore ye shal be lord & gouernar of al y^e lond y^t I haue in gouernance: wherfore I wil make you my knight, & souerain louer by y^e way of mariage: & first I present my selfe to you & al the power y^t I am lady ouer; and I ensure there was neuer mā as yet there as you be now: therefore refuse not the honor & profite that I offre you. Thā she toke a ryng fro her finger, and said: By this gift I put you in ful possession of me

and al mine; therfore, gentil knyghte, I requyre you receiue it. And whan Arthur herde her thus speke and saw the ring, thā he beheld wel the lady, & saw the gentilnes and fairenes y^t was in her, and felte her swete breth, & saw her smyling countenaūce: at the last his hert came to hym & remēbred Florence: thē he culd not kepe hym fro weping, and cast out many a profound and depe sigh, and beheld wel Proserpin, and said: A! gentil and noble lady! your amorous words perseth my herte so, y^t I fele my self at the gretest mischief that euer dyd any creature: for if I were y^e most hie and noble king that euer was, syth Alexander the Great, and if I had lerned in loue al the daies of my life, and at the ende might attaine to that case that I am in now, I shold wel think my payne & labour right well employed, and hyely rewarded: for if al the kinges of y^e world were al in one person, & al theyr goodes and honors, and al partes thereof were gathered together into one person, & if it plesed you to take him to your seruice, he shold wel think him self right hiely and derely gouerned: but, madame, I am but a simple person to be compared to your hie estate; therfore ye sholde abate gretly your renowne, yf ye should take such a straunge knight as I am: wherefore ye wold be blamed muche of your people; wherfore, madam, for Goddes sake aduise you better, & let this passe ouer, and take such a noble person as is mete for youre estate and honor. Syr, quod the lady, I quite al the world for you; for I wil non other but al onely you: therfore receiue me, for I wyl it shal be so, and none otherwyse: and if ye wil defend your opinion by her that ye told me of this last nighte in the forest, ye can not do so by reasō, for ye neuer saw her, nor she you, nor neuer spake w^t her; therefore there is no couenaunte made betwene you & her, but that lawfully ye may leue her and ye lyst: therfore ye can not excuse you to do thys my desyre, w^tout it be for cowardise that ye haue to enterpryse the gouernaunce of a realme. And whan Arthur had wel vnderstand her, he answered, and said: Madā, as God helpe me, I tolde you the trouth as it is; & I wold be glad to do that thing that sholde plesse you: how be it, of one thyng be ye in certayne, that I haue set my hert there as I haue shewed you, soo that I can neuer call it

agayne. Ye may behold here my body; take it & it please you; but my hert remayneth in an other place w^t her who hath it in kepyng. Than there was a lady came to the quene & shewed her that her dyner was redy. And than she sayde: Syr knight, thynk wel on thys matter; I gyue you respyte tyll to morowe. And so she toke Arthur by the hand and led hym into the hall; & there he saw so manye bordes couered, and so greate plenty of ladies, and damoselles, and knightes, and squyers, that he had great maruayl to behold the noblenes that he saw there. Than the quene sayd alowd, that euery body myghte here her, Syr lordes & ladies, behold this knyght, who shall be lord & capitayne of al my seynory. And whā they herde that, they cryed all w^t one voice, He is welcome! God kepe him! blessid be the houre y^t euer he came hither! & they all beheld hym maruaylously, & praysed moche his fresshe beaute & goodly demenour. Than there began grete feest & joy, with moche honourable tryumphe, & so were set to dyner & serued ryghte honourably: & after dyner they sported them a longe season: & at last the quene called to her two of her ladyes, the fayrest of all the company, & cōmaūded them y^t they shuld lede Arthur a playenge; & that they shuld shewe to him suche chere, to cause hym to loue one of them, yf they coulde brynge it about. And they answered, they wold do the best y^t laye in theyr power. So they ii. ledde forth Arthur in to fayre chambres & gardyns of pleasure; & they dyd as moche to drawe hym to loue one of them, as euer dyd woman to drawe onye man to loue: for theyr delynge w^t him was suche, that it wolde haue bē harde for ony other creature to haue w^tstand theyr occasyōs; for yf a woman be mynded to cast forthe her hokes & lynes to take ony man therw^t, it is very harde to scape out of theyr daūger; for in suche a dede a woman is more subtyll than the deuyll; for he causeth a woman of suche dysposycyon to do that thyng y^t he can not do hym selfe: in lykewyse thys quene cōmaūded these ladyes to do y^t she coulde not do her selfe: but Arthur, for al theyr pleasaūt occasyons, wolde neuer bende; for all y^t they dyd or sayd was very noyous to him, for alwayes he had in hys herte the remembraūce of the fayre Florence; & so in this

case he was bytwene them tyl it was tyme to go to rest. Than he was conuayed to hys chambre wyth xl. knyghtes, & a great multitude of torches ayenst hys comyng : the quene also was redy in hys chambre ; & than wⁱⁿ a lytle whyle after the spyces & wyne had ben eten & dronken, than the quene & al other toke their leue of Arthur & departed out of his chambre ; & than he went to hys bed : & there was brennyng al night before hys beddes fete iiii. chortes of wax. And whā euery bodye was a bedde, there came to Arthurs bed side a fayre damoyzell, sent to hym fro the quene : & she was in a syrrote of ermynes, & ouer y^t a ryche mantell of sylk ; & so she lened downe on the bed to Arthur, and with her hād stryked downe his head ryght swetely ; & there she made him suche lowly couētaūce, y^t he myghte perceyue well how she wolde haue had hym to haue taken her into his bed. And at laste Arthur sayde : Fayre lady ! I am in fere leest ye wyl take colde with your taryenge soo longe here : therfore eyther come to bedde to me, or elles go your way hens. Sir, quod she, I wyl ly wyth you wyth great joye : but fyrst ye shal assure me to take me for your loue, and neuer to haue other. A ! fayre lady, quod he, y^t can I not do, for I loue an other, and so thā shuld I be false of my promyse. Well, syr, sayd she, than I wyl go my way. Ye say wel, quod Arthur ; I praye God sende you good aduenture : & so therwith she departed : & Arthur slept as longe as it pleased him, til it was fayre daye in the mornynge. Than Bawdewyn opened the wyndowes, for Arthur wolde aryse. Than the quene entred in to his chābre, and Arthur sate in his bedde doynge on of his doublet. And as soone as Bawdewyn sawe the quene, he sayd vnto Arthur : Syr, behold who cometh hyther to you : by myne aduyse, lette not her escape at this tyme. Thā the quene sate downe by Arthur on the beddes syde. And she badde Bawdewyn go play him for a seasō. Madame, quod he, w^t a ryght good wyll : I shall not longe anoy you here. Thā the quene demaunded of Arthur, how he had taken his rest that nyghte ? & badde hym as than good morowe. And Arthur answered, & sayd : Madame, God, y^t all thinge hath formed, sende you his dere loue. Frende, sayd she, I gaue you yesterdaye respyte tyll thys day : therefore

as ye be now auysed eyther to take or refuse y^t I haue offred you : shewe me nowe your minde in y^t behalfe shortly. Madame, said he, I can shewe no more, nor gyue you no more than I haue done : ye may take my body, the which is here present ; but, as for my heart, I can not take it awaye from whence as it is. I haue enforced myselfe to haue it agayne ; but the more I thinke on her y^t hath it, the faster she holdeth it : therfore, madame, I can do no more, as helpe me God : ye haue here my bodye w^tout the herte. Thā the quene behelde Arthur wel, & embraced him about the necke, & al smyllynge sayd : Well, good frende Arthur, fro hensforth now be ye in peas ; for truly I haue ryght well assayed your trowth : but now I se well your stedfaste faythfulnes, for ye be true to your loue : for I se by it ye loue her faythfully, & certaynely ye haue good cause so to doo, for in lyke wyse she loueth you : for she hath refused themperour of Yndes loue for your sake : for her hert is on no creature of the world, but al onely on you : & I am she y^t anon after her natyuyte dydde desteny her to you, whan she was brought vp to vs into the Moūt Peryllous : & as for the other ii. ladies y^t were w^t you yesterday, the whiche so sore dyd tempte you to haue wonne your loue, the whyche they dyde but onely to assaye you ; one of them destenyed y^t the ymage in the paulyon who holdeth the chaplet, shuld neuer gyue it but to you ; & so ye to haue both the lady & the chaplet : & the other lady destenyed yt ye shulde haue the white shelde & the good swerde enchaunted, the which ye be in possessyon of : & the thyrde that came to your bed last, she destenyed that yf ony other persone wolde presume to take the fayre Flōrence, y^t he should die an yll deth : & I haue caused you to come into this coultre ; for I made you to haue the visiō of the egle of gold y^t ye thought ye sawe in your slepe ; & there ye sawe a dragon, the whyche wolde haue taken her fro you. The dragon is sygnyfyed by the Emperour of Ynde : for as muche as he may, he wyl let you to haue her : how be it, she shall be yours at length : but fyrste ye shal suffre muche payne & trouble : but I shall shewe you what ye shall doo : kepe well the loue of the Kynge of Orqueney, & of the Archebyssshop of Cornyte, for they shal be to you both true &

stedfaste; & specyally aboue all other loue well mayster Steuen, for by hys meanes ye shall haue her after your warre be doone: & in your warre I shal helpe you with xl.M. hawbertes. It is I that sent for you in the name of the hurte knyght, that ye should come to hym, to thentent that I myght assaye you, & to knowe of what faythfulnes ye were of: but now Florence may be in a surete y^t she is beloued of the best knyght of the world, and of the moost fayre and stedfaste knyght y^t now lyueth: therfore nowe, syr knyght, aryse, for it is hye tyme.

Thā the quene departed, & Arthur apparayled him & went into the hall, where as he foūd the sayd quene nobly accōpanyed: & all they rose ayenst Arthur, & he ryght swetely dyd salute them. Than the quene caused hym to syt downe by her, & he said: Madame, & it lyke your grace, it is nowe hye tyme that I take forth my journey & go thither as I am in minde to do. Certaynly, syr, said the quene, I am ryght wel content y^t ye so do: but fyrst ye shal dyne. So than Arthur dyned there w^t the quene; & after dyner he toke hys leaue of the quene, & of all the courte: & there was moche sorowe whan he departed; for all the court had trusted y^t he should haue bene theyr lorde. Than Arthur moūted on his horse, & so departed out of the castel, & soo came to the hurt knight, and demaunded of him how he dyd? and whether y^t he had well quytte his couenauntes or not? Sir, as God helpe me, quod the knyght, I do right wel, & ye haue right truly & nobly quytte you to me; therfore y^e Lorde that all thyng fourmed rewarde you: & truly I am and shall be your owne knyght. And so Arthur cōmaunded hym to God, and the lady also that was hys loue; & so rode forth his waye towarde Cornyte.

CAP. LXXI.

HOWE THAT ARTHUR, WHAN HE WAS DEPARTED FRO THE QUENE PROSERPINE, IT FORTUNED HYM TO TAKE HYS LODGYNGE W^t THE NEUEW OF SYR ISEMBARTE, WHO TOKE ARTHUR AND LOCKED HYM FAST IN A TOURE, TO THENTENT TO HAUE SLAYNE HYM BY NYGHT; BUT THERE ARTHUR DYD SO VALY-AUNTLY, THAT HE BRAKE OUT OF THE TOURE AND SLEW THE KNYGHT AND ALL HIS PEOPLE.

So it was that whan Arthur was departed fro Proserpyne, he rode so longe tyll at the laste he entred in to the londe of the Duke of Bygors neuewe, and so by aduenture he toke hys lodgyng wyth a knyghte who was neuewe to syr Isembarte, and he receyued Arthur wyth grete joy: than he was vnarmed; and whan he was redye wente into the hall where as this knight was. Thā the knyght demaūded of Arthur what was hys name? And he y^t doubteth nothyng answered, & sayd: Syr, I am called Arthur, & my squyer is named Bawdewyn. Than the knyght knewe well y^t it was he y^t had slayne his vncle, syr Isembarte; wherfore his hert rose sore ayenst hym; but he made no semblaūt therof; for he knewe well that Arthur was a knyght ryght sore to be redoubted, for he wyste well he was not able to resyst ayenst him; therfore he thought to slee hym in hys bedde a slepe, and in the meane tyme to close hym faste in a toure, & than to sende for the Duke of Bygor and al his company, & there to sle hym by nyght tyme. And than he made fayre semblaunt to Arthur, & sayd: Syr, I am boūde to loue you well, bycause ye haue slayne syr Isembart: for of all men lyuyng I hated hym moost, for he dydde me many dyspleasures: & thus w^t fayre wordes he draue of the season w^t Arthur tyll it was souper tyme, and than he was ryghte well serued: and after souper they sported them tyll it was tyme to goo to theyr restes. Than the knyght caused Arthurs bedde to be made in a strong tour: but it was so well hanged wyth clothes of sylke and arres,

that Arthur could not perceyue the walles nor strengthe therof. And whan Arthur and Bawdewyn were entred into the toure, incontynent the knyght dyd shytt fast the doore, whych was all of yren, and did barre it fast with foure great barres, & escryed on Arthur, and sayd: Syr, make as mery as ye can, for or ye depart out of your chambre ye shal lese your head; for ye maye saye ye be unhappy to come hither to your mortall enemy. And whan Arthur herde y^t, he was in his herte right sore dyspleased, & soo ran to the doore, thinkinge to haue opened it; but he coude not, for it was barred w^tout with foure great barres of stele. Thā the knyght armed him, and al his cōpany; so that they were well to the nōbre of xviii. persones: and the moone shone fayre and bryghte in at a lytle wyndowe behynde one of the tappetts. Than Bawdewyn tare downe the hangynges, & than they myght se clerely all aboute them: for the light of the mone came in at the window where as the prisoners were wont to be serued. Than Arthur armed hym, & toke his swerde in his hand, & beheld well the wyndowe, the whyche was very stronge barred wyth yren: and by aduenture he founde in the chābre a grete leuer of yren: and soo he toke it in bothe hys handes, as he that was ryght sore displeased, and dyd lyft vp the leuer as lyghtly as though it had ben but a sticke, & layd at the barres of yren with suche strength, that he all to braste the barres & stones, and made suche an hole, that an oxe myght well haue yssued out therat. Than the knyght and hys company wythout, whan they sawe that, they dydde caste at hym ryght rudely dartes, & quarelles shot out of the crosbowes. Thā Arthur toke his white shelde and went to the wyndowe, & there receiued all theyr shotynge; but they could in no wyse hurt hym. Than Arthur lepte out at the wyndow, & so descended downe and couered hym wyth hys shelde. Than they all ran at ones at hym; but Arthur gaue suche strokes, that he dasht downe al that euer he attayned vnto. And Bawdewyn toke a barre of yren, and did helpe his mayster to the best of hys power. And at the last Arthur encountred the knight of the place, and gaue hym suche a stroke, that he claue hym to the sholdres, & so fell downe dead to the earth. And than anone after he discomfited all the

remenaūt; for he delte suche dyscyplyne amonge them, that he cut of armes, handes, legges, and hedes, and all that euer he attayned vnto. Than Bawdewyn ran and dyd lyft vp the drawe brydge, and dyd shytt fast the gates, to thentent that non sholde escape; and soo they serched all aboute, but they coulde neither finde man nor womā: and than thei went to theyr restes til the next day, and so went forth on theyr journey towarde Cornyte.

CAP. LXXII.

HOWE THAT GOUERNAR, IN SERCHYNGE OF ARTHUR, BY ADVENTURE HE PASSED FORBY THE SAME CASTELL WHERE AS ARTHUR HAD SLAYNE THE LORDE THEROF: & THERE HE WAS ASSAYLED OF THE FRENDES OF THE SAYDE KNYGHT, AND THERE DYD SO VALYAUNTLY, THAT HE SLEWE THE MOOST PARTE OF THEM.

AND whan that Arthur hadd well ryden foure leges, than was it knowen how that the knight was slayne, & all that euer were in the place; & thyther came al the knightes frendes & fōūd hym dead: wherfore they were ryght sorowfull: and as they made this sorow, it fortunēd that Gouvernar passed forby the same castell: & as soone as they that were wythin sawe hym, they thought y^t it had ben he that had slayne theyr knyght and frende. Than they begon to crye all at ones: Let vs yssue out, for yonder is he that hath slayne oure knyght! and so they ran all at ones at hym with great axes & maces of stele, & dyd hym moche anoyaunce. Than Gouvernar delyuered hys spere to Jacket, hys squyer, and set hande to hys swerd, & gaue many great strokes rounde aboute hym, and cut of handes & legges, and made armes & heades to flye into the felde: and at the last he dyd so moche, that he delyuered hym selfe from them all, sauynge of iii. knyghtes, & they came with a grete randon to hym: and the fyrst that Gouvernar encoūtrede, he

strake him so rudely, that he fel to the earth, & in hys fallynge braste hys necke. Than he dressed hym to the seconde, and gaue hym suche a stroke wyth his sworde, that he made bothe helme and head to flye to the erth. Than the thyrde stode styll, without any mouing, and demaunded Gouvernar of whens he was? And he answered, howe y^t he was a straūge knight. And, syr, saide y^t other knight, where lay you this nyghte passed? I lay, sayde Gouvernar, vii. leges hens, with y^e lady of Quarforde. Well, syr, sayd the knyghte, than ye be not he that lay thys night in this castell? As God helpe me, sayde Gouvernar, it is not I, for I neuer sawe this castel before thys time. Well, syr, saide the knight, than I require you to come on wyth me a litel way, and I promise you I shall bring you agayne into thys same place wythoute hurte, or any maner of damage, to you or to anye of yours. And al thys he dyd because he wold brynge hym before the dead bodies, for to se whether any of them would blede agayne fresshely or not: for thereby he thought surely y^t he should knowe whether it were he or not that had slayne all those people. And Gouvernar accorded to hys desyre: and soo they entred intoo the castell, and there sawe the deade bodyes wythout anye more of bledynge. And whan the knyghte sawe that, he said: Sir, this people did runne agenst you wrongfully, and soo it appeareth by theym; for they that had thought moost for to haue wonne, I thynke hath nowe most loste: wherefore, syr, ye maye departe whan ye wyl, for ye shal not be let for me; and I pray to God sende you right good aduenture. Than Gouvernar departed, and soo folowed after Arthur.

CAP. LXXIII.

HOW THAT ARTHUR FOUND XL. KNIGHTES, WHO HAD TAKEN A DAMOYSELL, THE WHYCH THEY FOUND IN A FOREST, & THEY WOLD HAUE RAUYSSHED HER; & THERE ARTHUR RESCOWED HER, AND SLEW ALL THE XL. KNYGHTES, WHOO WOLD HAUE PYLLED AND ROBBED THE LADYES CASTEL, AND HAUE SLAYNE ALL THAT HAD BENE WITHIN.

ARTHUR rode forth so long, tyl at the last he came to a grete forest: and as he wold haue entred into it, there encountred hym a fayre yonge damosell, ryght sore wepyng, and her fayre yelowre heyre hangynge aboute her sholders: and she was ryght sore hurt in the vysage, and bledde fast. And as soone as she saw Arthur armed, her fere began to be dowble. And than she kneled downe, & helde vp her handes, and cryed hym mercy, and sayd: Gentyl knyght! saue my life and the honour of my body, and take al that euer I haue! And she was but in her smocke and a thynne syr-cote. And whan Arthur sawe her, he knewe wel that she was afrayed, and sayd: Fayre loue, haue no drede: for I wyll doo nothyng to you but good. And whan she hearde that she was in a surete, she sate her down on the ground; for she was in that case, for fere, that her legges would not bere her, nor could not speke of a great season. Than Arthur alyghted fro hys horse, and ryghte swetely toke her in hys armes, & sayd: My owne swete damoyzell! be ye now well assured & of good hert, and shew me what case ye stand in, and I shal ayd you with al my power. Than he saw how y^e maydens heyre was all ruffled by the reason of the wynd and thicke bussches y^t she had runne through: and Arthur, lyke a gentil knyghte, dyd stryke downe her heyre; for they were ryght fayre and goodly. And whan she might speke, she sayd: Syr, your great swetenes and gentyl herte hath taken fro me parte of my fere: how be it, all that season she wepte ryght pyteouslye, & sayd: Syr, I shall shewe you all the case, how it

standeth wyth me, syth it pleaseth you to knowe it. Syr, it is of trouth I haue dwelled here in thys foreste wyth an aunt of myne, a wydowe, a good olde lady, in a fayre great manoyre of hers. And nowe there is come into thys forest iiii. knyghtes, who are banysshed out of theyr owne countre, and they do nothyng but robbe and pyll: and they haue in theyr company xxx. horse men, and ten fote men, and so they robbe ouer all the countre, so that they leaue no house vnrobbed. And thys other daye they sente to myne aunt, that she should send them two hondred ponde of money; but myne aunt wolde not, for she wyste not why she should so do. And so now they be come, and haue layd syege rounde aboute myne aunes place, and there haue cōtynued these xv. dayes, and haue made theyr auowe, that they wyll neuer go hens tyl they haue wonne the place, and brent it downe to the erth, and slayne myne aunt. And so I yssued out at a lytel gate, to go to a brother of myne, to desyre him to gete togyther our lygnage, to come to helpe and deliuer vs fro these theues and robbers: & as I was goynge here by, there mette me ten foote men of theyr companye, who lyeth in a wayte to kepe the hie wayes; and thus they haue arayed me as ye se, and haue dyspoyled me, and taken away my palfrey: and soo woulde haue rauysshed me; but, as grace was, they felle at a varyaunce amonge themselfe who should haue ben the fyrst that should haue defouled me: & soo they fel togyther, & gaue eche other great strokes; and in the meane tyme I fledde awaye in great fere of my lyfe. Than Arthur sayd: Fayre damoyzell, go we two togyther where as these rybawdes be, and I shall doo soo moche to them, eyther by fayrenes or foulnes, that they shal rendre to you agayne your gowne and your palfrey. A! syr, sayd the lady, they are very yll people, and a great company. Fayre lady, care not therfore, sayde Arthur, God shall helpe you in your nede.

Thā the damoyssel mounted vpon Arthurs horse behinde hym, and so rode forth, tyll at the last they aryued where as these theues were, who were sekyng for the damoyzell amonge the bussches. And whan they sawe her on horsebacke, rydyng behynde Arthur, they ran all aboute hym to haue slayne hym:

but than Arthur toke hys swerde, & layde soo on these rybawdes, that wythin a shorte space he had slayne them all. Than the damoyzell had ryght great joye, and soo toke agayne her horse, & her clothyng, & apparayled her, and sayd to Arthur: Syr, I pray God kepe you from all euyl encombraunce. And Arthur sayd: My loue, nowe let vs go to youre aunt, & let vs helpe her as moche as we can. A! syr, said she, ye can neuer haue vyc-tory ouer them; for they be, at leest, xxx. on horse backe, well armed, and there be of them many good knyghtes: therfore anone they wyll slee you, the which should be a great damage; therfore let vs go to my brother, & gather togyther my frēdes, the whyche shall be in nombre, at the leest, of xl. persones on horse backe, & so than shal ye slee them. Than Arthur sayd: Fayre damoyzell, take ye no thought therfore; for I waraunt you, or I departe, I shall make them to be to vs suche frendes, y^t fro hēsforthe, to you, nor to none other, they shall do no great hurte. Wel, syr, said the lady, God giue you grace thus to do, for they be ryght yll people.

So thus they rode forth together into y^e foreste: & the same tyme Gouvernar & Jacket were entred into y^e same foresie to seke Arthur, for they had herde tydynges y^t he was riden into that forest before them. And thei rode so longe, tyll at the last they founde where as these x. theues lay dead: & than they thought wel how that Arthur had done that dede. Than Gouvernar sayd to Jacket: Frende, I knowe well my lorde Arthur hath bene here; I se well he is a good carpenter, for he hath made here a fayre syght of chyppes. Syr, truely, sayd Jacket, there is in hym gret dyspence, for he gyueth more than is of hym demaunded; for he hath gyuen more to thys company than they wold haue had.

And al this season Arthur rode forth styl wyth y^e damoyssel; & at last they aryued at y^e damoysselles aunes place: & the sayd theues as than had left theyr siege, & were gone after a great company of marchauntes, to thentent to robbe & to slee them. And in the meane season Arthur and the damoyssel came to the gate, and she called y^e porter. And as soone as he sawe her, he knewe her ryghte wel, and so set open the gate. And than Arthur and the damosel entred into the place. Than Arthur sayd to the

porter: Frende, let the gate stande styll open, for youre enemyes are all gone: for they all that were here were my cosyns, therfore I warrant you be not aferde of them: therfore let downe the brydge. And so the porter dyd, for he beleued hym.

Than the ladye led her knyghte into the hall. Than her aunte came to them, and made them ryghte great feast; and so vnarmed Arthur, and made redy the mete. And than they sate downe to souper: and as they sat, there entred into the hall one of the knyghtes of the sayde theues; and so he came streyght to the table where as they dyd eate, wyth a greate staffe in his hande, & without speakyng of any worde, he lyft vp hys staffe and strake the ladye a great stroke betwene the sholders, so that he made her to lene downe flatte on the table, and therewyth she made a greate crye: and therewyth the thefe toke a great cuppe of syluer full of wyne, and dyd caste all the wyne at Arthur where as he sate, and toke the cup wyth hym; and therewithall returned backe agayne, wythout speakyng of any word. And as he yssued oute of the hall, he met Bawdewyn, and strake hym so rudely, that he wyst not well where he was. Than Arthur sayde to the ladye: Madame, thus to be beten, and to lese your good, is a ryght great outrage. Than the knyght answered Arthur, and sayde: Syr, yf thou wylte amende it, come to the crosse way besyde yonder wood, and there shall ye fynde me. Than Arthur stepte vpon hys fete, and called for hys harneys; and anone Bawdewyn armed hym. Than the lady sayde: Gentyll knyght! in the honour of the hye God of heauen go not thither! for they are xxx. on horsebacke, well armed; wherfore ye can not endure agaynst them all. Madame, sayd Arthur, speke to me no more, for I wyl go loke on them: and so mounted on his horse, and folowed the knyght to the crosse way where as he was redy abydyng for Arthur. And as sone as he sawe Arthur comyng, he caste down the cuppe, and toke hys spere: and they met together so rudely, that the knight brake his spere: but Arthur strake hym so, that hys spere ranne through oute his bodye more than a fote; and so fell down dead. Than Bawdewyn sayd: Right now thou strakest me, & now y^e art stryken agayne: for thy great pryde thou hast now an yll rewarde:





but of suche deserte, suche payment. And so Bawdewyn drewe out the knyghtes owne sworde, & strake of therwyth the knyghtes hand wherwyth he had stryken the ladye at the table, and so dydde put the hande into the cuppe.

And the remenaunt of the theues, as they were departynge of theyr praye that they had wonne of the marchauntes, they espyed how one of theyr felowes was slayne : and therefore incontynent they toke theyr harneys, and ranne at Arthur on all sydes, and soo gaue hym many great strokes : but euer Arthur cast hys shelde before hym, and theron receyued al theyr strokes, so that they coude in no wyse enpayre hys shelde in any maner of poynt, wherat they had ryght greate maruayle. Than Arthur strake one of theym so rudelye, that hys heade flewe clene into the felde ; and he claue another to the shouldres ; and the thyrde he claue from the sholdre downe to the waste ; and so gaue amonge theym manye wonderous strokes : but they were very manye ; and soo some of them ranne to crosbowes and to dartes, and therewyth dyde hym moche anoyaunce : but alwayes ryghte valyauntlye he defended hym selfe. And so at the fyrste bronte he slewe vpon a xii. of theym.

Than, as they were thus fyghtynge together, it fortunied Gouvernar to aryue on them, by the reason of the bront and noyse that he had hearde, and there he sawe well how al that company were on one knyght, whome he sawe defende hym selfe ryght valiauntly : and so long he behelde hym, tyll at the laste he knewe well it was hys mayster, Arthur, by the reason of hys whyte sheld. Than he dasht to his horse, and came in amonge them as the wolfe doothe amonge shepe ; and strake soo the fyrste that he encountred, that he ranne hym clene throughout the body : and he set his hand on his swerde, and strake soo an other, that hys heade fell on Arthurs horse necke. And whan Arthur sawe that, he knewe well it was his old knight, Gouvernar, wherof he had great ioie ; and so rested hym selfe too beholde Gouvernar, how that he fought w^t his swerd. And there he sawe how Gouvernar dyd cleue one downe to the gyrdell. Than dyd Arthur smyle, and sayde : Thys mayster chastiseth ryght sore his scolers, for he teacheth them a hard

lesson : by the fayth that I owe vnto God, I shall helpe hym. Syr, sayde Bawdwyn, whan nede is, than a frende is proued : God giue you grace well to do. And so Arthur rusht into the prese, and confounded al that euer he attayned vnto. Thā one of these theues y^t was on fote, for he had lost hys horse before, ranne at Arthurs horse w^t a spere, and strake him clene throughout the bely ; and so the horse fell downe dead. Than Arthur lepte on his fete, and hys swerde in hys hand, and dressed hym to the thefe that had slayne his horse, and gaue him suche a stroke, that he claue hym too the sholders. And whan Gouvernar saw Arthur on his fete, he was ryght sorowful ; and soo dasht into the prese, and encountred a knyght so rudely, that neyther his helme nor coyfe of stele could saue hym, but he was clouen to the hard tethe, and so he fell downe dead. Than Bawdwyn toke hys horse, and brought it to Arthur ; and quickly he lepte vp theron, and habandoned him selfe among hys enemies. And so betwene hym & Gouvernar, of the xxx. they lefte but foure alyue, & so were taken ; and in theyr takyng, two of them were slayne, & the other two were bound fast : & Bawdewyn and Jacket dyd kepe them.

Than there came to them the lady and her nece ; and when they sawe theyr enemyes lye dead on the ground, & saw the noble valure that was in those two knightes, these ladies praysed them moche in theyr heartes. And there they sawe how that Arthur and Gouvernar were togyther, making good chere eche to other, and doynge of theyr helmes. Than the lady sayd to Arthur : Syr, from whence cometh this knyght ? Is he partaynyng to you ? Ye, truly, madam, sayd Arthur, he is a frende, who hath ryght well holpen me thys daye : we sawe not together of this gret season. And the lady saw wel how that he was fayre and maruelously byg ; and sayd : Syr, ye were happy to come hither at thys point : and to you, sir knight, ye haue acheued this enterpryse of these theues, I requyre you let these other two be slayne or elles hanged, for of an yll rote spryngeth an yll tre : for they wyl neuer do good if they escape. And whan the theues herde that, they were in great feare, and sayd to Arthur : Gentill knyght ! saue oure lyues, and we shal shewe you where is, in the forest,

ryghte greate treasoure. Where is that? sayde Arthur. Syr, we wyll bryng you thither, soo that we dye not. And Arthur answered, and sayd: Syrs, as for your lyfe and death lyeth in these ladyes handes to do what it pleaseth them: but shortly brynge vs to thys greate tresoure. Than these two theues wente on before: & Bawdwyn toke the cuppe wyth the knightes hande therein, and dyd presente it to the lady from Arthur, who thanked hym muche: and soo would haue gyuen the cuppe to Bawdwyn; but he wold not take it, for he said he had ynough to do with the cariage of his horse and harnes. So Arthur rode so longe after these theues in the forest, tyll at the last they came into a wyld sauage place in a great valley, & there they foud bowes, and crosbowes, hawbertes, helmes, & gownes, couerynges, and other cloth, the which these theues had robbed al about the country: and also there they founde, hydde in the grounde, golde & syluer grete plentye, and cuppes, and chalyces, and other vessell of siluer; the whiche mounted to a gret value. Than Arthur sayde to the lady: Madame, cause all thys ryches to be borne to youre place; & rendre ye agayn suche thynges as hath ben stolen fro churches, & other people of the countrey: as for me, nor none of my company, shall take the worth of one peny therof. And the ladye dyd as Arthur cōmaunded her: but she desyred Arthur that the twoo theues myghte be slayne; and so they were incontinent. Than they returned to the ladyes place, and wente to souper, and were rychly serued.

Than Arthur demaunded of Gouvernar, howe mayster Steuen dydde, and the Markes. And he answered, & sayd, howe that they dyd ryght well, and were in good helth; and how that they dyd cōmaunde them vnto hym: & in lyke wyse dooth the fayre lady Margarete of Argenton, for she is come to the Port Noyre to se her vncl, the Markes: wherof Arthur had greate ioy. And whan the lady of that place herde y^e, she knewe than well that Arthur was y^e same knyght that had deliuered the Markes out of pryson, & also had rescowed the lady Margarete from the handes of the Duke of Bygors neuewe. Than shee kneled downe before Arthur, and sayde: Syr, I thanke you, as muche as I can, or may

do, for the aide & socour that ye haue done for the lady of Argenton, for I am her cosyn germayn. And whan Arthur sawe her knele, he toke her vp, & so made greate ioye together tyll it was tyme to go to theyr restes. And in the mornynge Arthur rose and toke his leue of the lady; and so rode forth on his waye to goo to Cornyte; for it was as thā but xv. dayes to Saynt Bartylmewe tyde, whan as the great tournay should be bitwene the Kynge of Soroloys and themperoure of Ynde.

Now wyll we leaue to speke of Arthur and of Gouvernar, and speke now of mayster Steuen.

CAP. LXXIV.

HOW THAT MAYSTER STEUEN DEPARTED FRO THE PORTE NOYRE TO GO TO THE TOURNAY AT CORNYTE, AND TOKE WITH HYM THE NOBLE FLORENCE RYCHE PAUYLYON; WHEREIN WAS THE YMAGE WYTH THE CHAPLET, WHO RESEMBLED IN ALL THYNGE VNTO THE LADY FLORENCE, THE MOOST PAYRE CREATURE THAT WAS AS THAN IN ALL THE WORLDE.

THUS, as Arthur rode forth on hys waye towarde Cornyte, mayster Steuen was at the Porte Noyre wyth the Markes, and with the gentyl lady Margarete of Argenton: and there she dydde sporte and playe her as a gentyll damoyzell oughte for to doo; and euery daye she made chaplettes of roses and other floures, the whyche she gaue to mayster Steuen: and she made hym also, with the nedell worke, a gyrdell and a purse of golde and sylke. She loued hym ryghte well in her herte.

Than mayster Steuen aduysed well howe that the greate tournay at Cornyte approached nere: therefore he thought it was tyme for hym to departe thitherwarde. Than he sayd to the

Markes : Syr, I desyre you to kepe well thys castell of the Porte Noyre : & to you, Fayre lady, I requyre you kepe ye styll companie here with the Markes, your vnclē, tyll ye here fro Arthur ; for, and I can, he shal be here bitwene this and Saint Remyges daye. And right swetely she did graunte him there to abide. Than he toke his leue of them ; & so toke al his bokes, and the egle of gold, & the pauilion wyth the ymage holdynge the chaplet : & soo departed, & rode soo longe tyll he aryued at Cornyte. Than he mouēd vp the stayres into the palays, at the whiche time the fayre Florence was entred into her owne chaumbre : and the kynge at that tyme was not in the palays, but Florēce knyghtes were playenge at the chesse, & at the tables, and other dysportes ; and the maister came in amonge them sodeynly. And as soone as they sawe hym, they ran to him on al sydes, and made to hym right great feest & chere. And at the last it came to the knowledge of Florence how that he was come, and incontynente she came to hym. And as soone as he sawe her, he dyd of his bonet, and saluted her. And she said : Sir, ye be ryght hertely welcome now, for I was in fere leest that ye wolde not haue come to this tournay : therfore it is now tyme that my paulyon be pyght vp. And soo she ledde the mayster into her chaumbre, and toke hym aparte ; & than she demaūded of hym, how that he had done syth he departed from her, and howe that Arthur dyd ? Madame, sayde he, I sawe not Arthur syth he dyd the batayle at Argence : for as soone as the batayle was ended, & that the Kynge of Orqueney, & Duke Phylp, & all the hole company, were in great joye and myrth, there came a messenger to Arthur from the Wounded Knyght, to thentent that he should goo to him for to gyue hym helth : and soo the same propre houre he departed : whereof euery man was so sore troubled, that they all departed the same daye. A ! mayster, sayd Florence, than I fere me greatly of his deth. Madame, sayd the mayster, be ye in a surete : take no care for hym ; for he fereth not all the worlde ; for there is not suche an other knyghte in all the worlde agayne. Madame, I shewed hym how that ye did cōmaunde you vnto hym ; & how that ye desyre hym, as derely as he loueth you, y^t he should not

fayle for any thyng, but to be at thys next great tournay at Cornyte : and he dyd graunte me for certayne, that he wolde not fayle therof. A ! mayster, sayd she, dydde ye not requyre hym faythfully so to be ? Madame, as God helpe me, I waraūt you he wyll not fayle. Well, mayster, said she, I requyre you cause me to se him & to speke with him as shortly as it may be. Madame, sayd he, with a right good wyll. Well, mayster, than I praye you se that my paulyō be pight vp in the felde incontinent : for paraduventure if he come nowe ony thyng before the daye, and se no sygne or token in the felde y^t ony tournay should be there, than it myght fortune he wold departe agayne. Madame, ye saye right well, quod the mayster, for in dede it is hye tyme.

Than she sent for syr Neuelon, her marysshall, & cōmaūded him y^t her chefe pauilion should be pight vp in the felde ; & from thensforth that all her knightes shulde lodge euery night about her pauilyon. And as she cōmaūded, so it was done. And also the mayster caused the paulyon with the ymage to be pyght vp, & many other tentes and paulyons ; but the ymage y^t helde the chaplet in the paulyon was so goodly & delectable to behold, that no man coude be satysfied with lokinge on her : how be it, the fresshe beaute of Florence was incōparable therto. And so there were pyght vp x. tentes & xiiii. paulyons, all pertayning to the noble Florence, besyde all other y^t were pertaynyng to her noble lordes & knightes : for she had there, at that tyme, out of her owne realme, to the nōbre of xv.C. knyghtes. Also syr Neuelon caused his tent to be pight vp, who was senesshall to the gētyll Florēce, & chefe of her couseye nexte mayster Steuen ; & she trusted moche in hym, for he was a wyse man and a good knyght, & no yll sayer : and his paulyon was set next to the forest, & ferthest fro the ladies paulyon : and nexte to the ladyes tent was syr Ancelles paulyon, neuw to the senesshall, who was a ryght hardy and a valyaunt knyght : the thyrd paulyon was pertaynyng to the Archebyssshop of Cornyte, who was vncle to Florence, & brother to the King of Soroloys, father to Florēce : the fourth was syr Myles, of Valefounde : the fyft was syr Peter Brysebar, a redoubted knyght. Also than thither was come syr Rowland, of

Bygor, who was one of Florence knyghtes; but he was right enuyous, and he was cosin germayne to the Duke of Bygor; & he caused his paulyon also to be pyght vp, the whych was right goodly & fresshe to beholde. He was not in the coultre whan the batayle was bytwene Arthur & the Duke of Bygors neuewe: and whan he knewe the dyscomfytur of hys cosyn, he was so sorowfull, that he dyd neyther eate nor drynke but lytle of three dayes after y^t he knew therof: and whan he had somewhat passed hys sorowe, than he made a vowe and promise, that if he might se or knowe the knyght that had slayne hys cosyn, syr Isembarte, y^t he wold be auenged of hym yf euer it lay in his power. And he myght well be descended of the lygnage of the Duke of Bygor; for he was fell, & spyteful, and proude: and the chefe cause that he came to the tournay, was to thentent to encountre Arthur if he came thyther. So these vi. pyghte vp theyr tentes round aboute Florence paulyon.

Than vpon a daye Florence yssued out of Cornyte, & all her chyualry wyth her, and soo wente into her owne paulyon: and all other lordes and knyghtes, ladyes and damoysselles, went eche of them into their owne tentes and paulyons, the whyche were to the nombre of two thousand. And Florence cōmaunded that euery body should make as great feest & joy as they coule doo: so than there began greate feest and joye. Than knyghtes began to just and tournay, to assaye theym selfe; and the ladyes and damoysselles dydde sende theym chaplettes & streamers, to set on theyr helmes & speres; & some company of knyghtes sported them in the forest; and some wente to the fayre ryuer with sparhawkes and gerfowcons on theyr handes; & some behelde the hye tournes & tournynges of the sakers & gerfawcons; squyers and varlettes were furbusshynge & scourynge of theyr maysters harneys & bokelyng of sheldes and helmes, & knockynge on hedes & burres on myghtye speres; ladyes and damoysselles did carowle & sing, and daunce with lusty knyghtes; and clerkes sange balades; and knyghtes and ladyes talked of loue: some enbraced, and some kyssed & shewed sygne of loue; & suche as were sycke or hurte, were shortely made hole. Than Florence behelde these lusty damoysselles playnge &

laughynge wyth these fresshe yonge lusty knightes, clappyng theym on the backes w^t theyr whyte handes, & shewynge theym greate sygne of loue, and giuyng eche to other laces, gyrdels, gloues, keuercheues, rynges, chaplettes, and garlondes of fresshe floures. Than Florence cast out a great sygh, and sayd to mayster Steuen: Syr, se ye not how these ladyes and damoyselles laughe & play, eche of theyr loue? A! mayster, & what haue I deserued that I cannot haue my loue to sporte me with him, as wel as they do wyth theyrs? for I loue with al my hole herte, & yet I wote not what he is: for my hert lyeth on hym that I neuer sawe: so thus I am in the sonne without hauynge of ony lyght: I am in loue wythout joy. A! dere maister, what haue I deserued more than onye other? Than the mayster sayd: A! deare ladye, be ye of good comforte; for a tyme shall come that shall gyue you lyght: the cloude that as yet couereth the lyght, in good season shal be made bryght. A! mayster, sayd Florence, dyd ye not hertely cōmaūde me vnto hym, whan ye wente to Argence? By the fayth that I owe to God, sayd the mayster, I dydde it, madame, in the best wyse y^t I coulde ymagyn.

Thus the fayre Florence and the mayster euery daye, from the Wednesdaye tyll Saterdaye, talked togyther of the comynge of Arthur; the whyche Saterdaye the archebyssshop sange masse afore Florence; and he and al the hole barony that day dyned wyth the noble Florence, for she had desyred them all so to do.

CAP. LXXV.

HOW SYR ROWLANDE OF BYGOR APECHED ARTHUR OF TREASON, BYCAUSE THAT HE HAD SLAYNE HYS COSYN AT ARGENCE, AND SOO DEFYED HYM AT THE VTTERAUNCE: BUT ARTHUR AT THE FYRSTE STROKE DRAUE HYM DOWNE, HORSE AND ALL, TO THE EARTH, AND BRAKE ONE OF HYS ARMES AND TWO RYBBES; WHEREOF FLORENCE WAS RIGHT JOYOUS; AND SPECIALLY WHAN SHE SAWE HER LOUER, ARTHUR, WHOME SHE NEUER SAWE BEFORE. AND HOW AFTER, SYR ROWLANDES SERUAUNTES ASSAYLED ARTHUR TO HAUE SLAYNE HYM, BUT HE VALY-AUNTLYE DEFENDED HYM SELFE, AND SLEWE MANY OF THEM.

AND after dyner, the archbyssshop and maister Steuen, & syr Rowland and the other barons, went talkyng and playing togeder out of the medowe, and entred into the forest; & at the laste they came to a fayre grene oke, the whych dyd caste a fayre shadowe a greate cyrcuyte aboute it; and the grasse was fayre and soft, and thyck vnderneath: so there they sate them downe and talked together of many thynges, tyl at the last the mayster demaunded of syr Rowlande, how that he lyked by that country about Cornyte, and whether it were fairer than the country of Bygor? Than sir Rowland answered, that it was not to hym that he would giue any answere in that case. Why, sayd the maister, & as for me, I am as lytell bound to you, as you to me. Well, sayd syr Rowland, that maketh no matter; for though ye be son to a kyng, yet wyl I not answere you in that matter, nor in non other, take it as ye list. Why, syr, sayd the mayster, haue I trespaced any thing agenst you? Yea, y^t ye haue, sayd syr Rowland, & that ryght greuously; for ye were at Argence whā my cosyn, syr Isembart, was slayne; and ye kepte cōpanye & were chefe cōseiler w^t the knight that slew him; therfore I bere grudge in mine hert agaynst you; & I promise to God, that yf I may encountre hym that dyd

that deede, I shal do as much to hī as he hath done to my cosyn. Syr, sayd y^t maister, whan ye mete him, ye may do as ye wyll: but often times it fortuneth that a man can not attayne to do so muche as he would do; nor paradventure he can not, nor dare not: butte as for that dede ye oughte not to be dyspleased, though right was done: for God lightly wyll suffer no wronge, but al wayes he fordereth and aideth the right cause, how so euer it falleth. Well, sayd syr Rowlande, than ye saye howe that my cosyn was in the wronge: but there is none y^t sayeth so, but he sayeth otherwyse than trouthe is, and that wyll I proue before euerye man agenst you, and ye wyll mount on your horse; for I say the mater was not truly nor egally delt withall. Syr, sayde the maister, ye lay vnto me great outrage and vylany, where as ye saye that I dyd in that matter otherwyse than well and truely; wherof I say plainly ye lye falsely in your head: and certainly I shal neuer be in reste tyll that I haue sette a knyghte agenst you to proue it: and, yf I can, it shall be the same knyght whyche dyd the batayle agenst youre cosyn, who shal cause you to call agayne these wordes that ye haue spoken. Than the mayster rose ryghte greatlye dyspleased, and woulde haue departed and left that companye; but the archebyssshop helde hym agayne, & prayed him that he wold suffre all that for that tyme: & at hys request he sayd he wolde so do. Than syr Neuelon, the senesshall, sayd to syr Rowlande: Syr, be content w^t the wordes of the mayster, for he is a man of greter dygnyte than ye be of; for though he had stryken of your head, ye haue not soo hye a frende y^t durst reuenge your cause: the noble Kynge of Orqueney was at y^t batayle; & wher as ye say that the mater was not truly delte wythall, ye speke than vylany ayenst the kynge, & ayenst Phylp, Duke of Sabary, his neuewe, and ayenst all suche as were there, the whych seyng nedeth not there to be rehersed; for it is a shame to you to suffre suche wordes to passe out of youre mouth. Than, sore dyspleased, Brysebar stepte forth, & sayd: Syr Rowlande, ye say that the mayster dyd not truely in y^t mater whan your cosyn was slayne; wherein I saye that ye saye not truely; & yf ye wyl mayntayne the contrary, take youre harneys, and I shal take myn,

& let it be seen who is in the trouth : & therwith syr Brysebar was rysynge to haue departed ; but the bysshop helde him agayn, & sayd : Loke, who soo euer speketh ony worde more of this mater, let hym be sure I shall not be hys frende ; & so they left there spekyng of y^e mater for that tyme, for the bysshop brought them in an other talkynge. And as they were deuysynge & talkynge of one mater and other, Arthur and Gouvernar yssued out of the forest and soo entred into the medowe. And than Arthur behelde the goodly tentes and pauilyons that were pyght all aboute the felde ; and also he sawe the sheldes, and helmes, and harneys, shynynge ayenst the sonne, & herde the greate coursers braye, & crye, & stampe with theyr fete : the whych syght & noyse quyckened his herte and courage. At the last Gouvernar espyed Florence pauilyon, wherin was the ymage with the chaplet, and shewed it to Arthur. And whan he sawe it, his herte inwardly reioysed ; for he knewe well it was his ladyes paulyon.

And by y^e tyme the mayster & al other were entred agayne into the fayre medowe ; & Arthur sate on hys horse in a grete study, & mused of hys aduenture. And at the last syr Myles, of Valefoūde, espyed hym & knewe well how y^e it was Arthur, for he had seen hym before at Argence. Than he said to the other knyghtes that were aboute hym : Lordes ! beholde yonder is a knyght al armed, who is ryght fayre to beholde : is there onye here y^e knoweth hym ? for he wolde not name him, bicause of syr Rowland. And whā mayster Steuen sawe him, he said : I know hym ryght well : wherfore I trust y^e the great wind that was lately blowen wyll now sone be layde : & of hys comynge he had greate joye in his herte ; so moche, that he forgate in a maner al his displeasure. Certaynly, syr, sayd the senesshal, he is right fayre and gracyous to beholde ; wherfore I byleue he is of a great bloude : but me thynketh, by his semblaunt, he is in a great study, wherfore so euer it be. By my hode, quod Brysebar, I knowe full well wherfore he studyeth. Than the mayster, & the senesshal, & Brysebar, rose, and fayre & easely wente to hymwarde, & sayd eche to other, how y^e they wolde not name hym as at y^e tyme, bycause of syr Rowlande : and soo they came before Arthur, who

was styll in his study. And Gouvernar, as soone as he sawe the mayster, he alyghted fro hys horse and enbraced hym, and all the other barons eche after other. And therwythal Arthur lefte hys musynge: and as soone as euer he sawe mayster Steuen and the other knyghtes, he dyd alyght from hys horse, and did salute them all one after an other; and so among them there was made right great feast and ioy. And than syr Rowlande meruayled muche what knight he mighte be; becaus he sawe soo much chere & ioye made to him, and that they knew him, and he not. Than the senesshal sayd to Arthur: Syr, I wyl ye take my tent and pauilion as your own, & so ye and I to kepe company together in this turney. Syr, I am wel content, quod Arthur; and so incontinent he was vnarmed, & al his harnes and horse was sent to the senesshals tent.

And whā Arthur was aparayled, than the mayster sayde to hym: Syr, let vs go & salute ye the archbysshop, who is brother to Kyng Emendus, and vncle to the faire lady Florence. And whan Arthur herd speke of Florence, his hert trembled for ioye, and soo he went towarde the bysshop. And whan the bysshop saw him, he rose and dyd salute him, & so did sir Miles, and also syr Rowland of Bygor: how be it, they knew hym not: and so the bisshop beheld hym affectuously, for he semed to hym to be y^e most fayre knyghte of the world. Than Arthur dyd of hys bonet and dyde salute the bysshop, and al other; and in likewise they hym agayne. Than the bysshop demaunded of him what he was? Syr, said Arthur, I am a knight straüger. And as soone as syr Rowlande herde hym saye so, it ran into his hert that it was the same knyght that slewe hys cosyn: & than he demaunded of him what was his name? Syr, sayd he, my righte name is Arthur. And how cal ye youre squyer? quod syr Rowland. Syr, sayd Arthur, he is named Bawdwyn. Than syr Rowlande knew wel that it was he that slew his cosin; & soo demaüded of him fro whens he came? Syr, quod Arthur. I come streyght fro Argence. Wel, syr, quod Rowland, saw you the batayl that was done there betwen a straunge knight and the Duke of Bygors neuewe? And whan y^e maister herd tho demaüdes, he was right ioyous; for than he wyst well that the

wordes y^t had be spoken before should be wel reuēged. Than Arthur answered syr Rowlande, and sayd: Syr, whan y^t bataile was done, I passed forby. I thynke, sayd syr Rowland, that it was your selfe thā dyd that batayle w^t syr Isembart. Syr, quod Arthur, I wolde be ryght gladde to be of suche valure, as too conquere in batayl such a knight as he was. Certenli, quod Rowland, I know wel it was you; and therfore I saye that falsely and vntruly ye dyd it: and that I wyl make good incontyrent my bodye agenst yours. And whan the archbyssshop herde that, he blamed much syr Rowland for his wordes, and desyred hym y^t al the matter myghte be in rest & peas. But he proudly answered, & said, how that he wold not, but y^t he wold arme him incontinent. Than the mayster sayd to the byssshop: Naye, syr, let hym alone, for he is in the ryght; therfore he hath good cause to be reuenged yf he can: for whā he hath his enemy present before him, what shal he nede to go seke for hym any ferder: and all that he sayde, because he thought longe tyl they were together: for he wyst wel how y^t Arthur should reuenge ryght well suche words as he had sayd to hym before. Than Gouvernar, ryght sore dysplesed, stepte forth and sayd: Syr Rowlande, ye be to muche outragymous to appele thus this knight of falsenes whom ye knowe not, nor neuer saw hym before, nor wyst not what he is: therfore I say playnly ye lye falsly in youre heade: he is not false, nor neuer was to you nor yet to ani other: and in that quarel here is my guage to fight w^t you, my body agenst yours. Thā Arthur blamed Gouvernar for his words, & commaunded hym to be in peace; & so he dyd folowe his plesure. Than Arthur sayde: Syr Rowland, yf ye lay any thing agenst me, I am here redy to defend me agenst you. Well, syr, sayde Rowland, of falsnes I appele you in y^t quarell: mount shortly on your horse, & defend it and ye dare. Well, syr, sayde Arthur, ye say wel: go on your way, and I shall not be longe fro you. Syr, sayd the mayster to syr Rowlande, ye haue the herte of a noble baron; therfore ye do ryght well to defend your ryght, for your ryght & trouthe shal surelye helpe you. All thys he sayde but in a mockery. Than syr Rowlande went to arme him: and the senesshall, and the

archebysshop, and mayster Steuen, kepte styll company wyth Arthur, who incontynente was armed.

Than the mayster wente streyght to the noble Florence, & founde her in her ryche tente standynge on a cussbyn of sylke: and as soone as she sawe the mayster, she began to smyle, and called hym to her. Than he sayd: Madame, and it lyke youre grace, Arthur is come; and at his fyrst comyng, syr Rowland of Bygor hath appeched him of falsnes for sleynge of hys cosyn at Argence; and so they be bothe about to arme them, for the batayle betwene them shal be incontynent. And whan y^e lady herde hym speke of Arthur, her bloud trembled: and therewith she blushed as ruddy as a rose, and was in her hert ryght ioyous of hys comyng, and ryghte sore dyspleased that syr Rowland should fyght wyth him so sone at hys fyrst comyng. Than she sayde: Mayster, I doubte me leaste that any vylany should come to Arthur by fighting wyth syr Rowlande. Madame, said the mayster, ye know not as yet y^e noble valure of Arthur; for I answere you he setteth nothyng, though he had to do all at ones wyth suche vi. as syr Rowland is: therfore, madame, yssue out of your pauilyon and loke on your louer, and beholde whether he be fayre or not: the archebysshop, your vncl, is wyth hym, and your senesshal, and syr Ancean, & also syr Miles of Valefounde, and syr Brysebar: all these are ryghte sore dyspleased of the felony that syr Rowland hath done to Arthur, your knyght. A! mayster, sayde Florence, would to God he were myne! Let vs go, and I pray you shewe hym vnto me, for I desyre muche to se him.

Than Florence yssued out, noblye accompanied w^t ladyes and damoysselles to the numbere of C.C.: and by that tyme the tydynge was spredde all about the felde in euery mannes tent, how y^t syr Rowlande was armyng of hym to fyght wyth a straunge knyght. And whan y^e archebisshop & the other barons sawe Florence, they went and encountred her, and Arthur was in theyr company; and there they saw eche other; wherwith they were bothe so sore stryken wyth the darte of loue, that they lost theyr countenance: howe be it, Florence, as goodly as she myght, maintayned her countenance: and than she laid her hande on

the bisshoppes sholdre, and demaunded of him what knight Arthur was, who aboue al other semed to be the most gracyous & gentyll? And he had his helme of his head, and behelde euer Florence; and also her fayre eyen wente neuer fro hym, for she coulde not kepe herselfe fro beholdyng of hym. Than Brysebar sayde: Madam, this same is the knyght that brought in my syghte the fowle monster of the Brosse to vtteraunce; & euer syth he hath offred his seruice to be your knyght, yf it please you so to except him. In the name of God, sayd Florence, he is ryght hertely welcome; and with a right good wyl I retayne him as my knight. Ryght dere lady! sayd Arthur, I humbly thanke you of the hie honour that ye do to me, as to retayne me to be of the company and numbere of so many and noble wyse men as your knightes be. And w^t these wordes, there came a messenger to Florence, and shewed her how that the Kyng of Orqueny and Duke Philyp wer comyng w^t v.C. knightes in their company; & how that he was within a myle and a halfe. They are ryght hertely welcome, said Florence. And by that time sir Rowland was armed, and also Arthur. Than the harawde began to crye: Go togyther, bayle! bayle! Than Gouvernar set on Arthurs helme on hys head, & Bawdewyn brought him his horse; & he mouēd theron as lightly as though he had bene vnarmed: than he toke hys whyte shelde, and dyd cast it aboute hys necke. And as soone as Florence saw the sheld, she knew it ryght wel, and sayde in her herte: A! dere loue! that shelde becometh you ryght well: I pray to God it maye be well employed vpon you. Than he toke a great & a myghty spere: and whan he was redy at all poyntes, than he turned his eyen toward Florence, and her eyen wente neuer fro hym, but behelde hym wyth feruent loue and desyre: wherwith Arthur toke suche hardynes, that he feared not all the worlde at that houre. So than he turned and dasshed his horse towarde syr Rowlande, & he in lyke wyse to him: & they went togyther as though thunder had fallē fro heuen: & all that behelde them sayd one to another: A! good Lorde! what a goodly knyghte is yonder straunge knyght! And syr Rowland hyt Arthur so rudely, that he brake his spere all to sheuers: but Arthur strake him w^t hys spere, the whych was

so long & byg so vnmesurably, y^t he sente bothe knight and hors and al to y^e erth in a hepe; wherwith syr Rowlādes arme brake asonder in y^e middes, and y^e hors and sadel fell so sore on him, y^t it brake two ribbes in hys syde, & so he lay a great space in a traūce: wherof Florence had more ioy thā euer she had of any thing, and specially whan she sawe her loue do so hye dedes of prowes.

Than syr Rowland had brought thyther xiiii. knyghtes. And whan they saw theyr mayster, syr Rowland, at that myschyef, they all toke theyr harnes, & al at ones ran & assaylid Arthur. Thā Arthur drewe hys good sward, & strake so the fyrst that he encountred with, that he claue him to the chinne; and fro y^e second he made his head to flie into y^e felde; and the thyrde he made to flye ouer hys horse crope, & his legges vpward. Thā euery man behelde the hye prowess of Arthur, and said eche to other: The strokes of this knyght are greatly to be doubted. Than Gouvernar toke a great pyece of a broken charyot, and dasht into y^e prese, and draue downe knyghtes both horse and mā to y^e earth. Than euery man sayd vnto other: This knight is not w^tout company; theyr almes is right hard to indure; I would haue none of theyr pitaunce; they are grete dyspenders, for they gyue more than is of thē demaunded. And whā Florence sawe the outrage of those knyghtes, she was right sorowful, for she had grete fere of Arthur. Than she cōmaunded her seneshal, y^t he shuld go and depart y^e batail, and that those knyghtes should be al taken, and their handes boūd fast together, in a punysshemente of theyr dedes. Than her senesshal incontynent mounted on a gret courser, and in a rich corset of grene, gyrt w^t a white silkē lace, and his hat at his back, w^t a white warder in his hande. Than he spurred furth his hors, & caused knyghtes to come out of euery tent: & so they toke the knyghtes y^t wer fightinge w^t Arthur and Gouvernar; but first, of the xiiii. there was vi. slain, and dyuers other sore hurt. Thā Florence and the Archebyssshop came to syr Rowland, where as he lay stil at y^e time in a traunce, half a slepe: & whan he was reuiued, & saw y^e byshop and Florence standyng before hī, he desired that the knight that had iusted with him

might come and speke w^t hym; & so Brisebar went for him. And whan Arthur was come, syr Rowland said to hī: Syr, ye be welcome: and, for Goddes sake, pardō me of the outrage y^t I haue done agenst you, as to enterpryse to iuste agenst you; wherof now I sore repent me; and fro hens forth I wil be your knight, and good frende. Syr, sayd Arthur, yf ye haue any thyng trespassed agenst me, I pardon you with good hert. Than there were brought forth the knyghtes of syr Rowland, who wer fast boūd, becaus they foughte agenst Arthur w^tout anye defyaunce before. Thā said Florence: In the name of God they shal make a large amēdes. Certainly, madame, sayd syr Rowlande, I am content y^t they make amendes to y^e knight as he wyl him selfe. So be it, said Florence. Madam, sayd Arthur, I thank your grace, syth they shall make me amēdes at mine own saying: therefore than they shal go quite & fre, for I pardō thē: for they dyd but like knightes to help and ayd their lord and master. And whā the bisshop and al other herd him say so, they sayde: A! this is a free and a gentyll knight! And thā the gentil Florence said in her hert: A! mine own loue! ye haue a gentil hert and a fre; & mine hert is w^t yours, and euer shal be. And than she saide to Arthur: Syr knyght, ye shall go and vnarm you w^t my senesshal, who shal holde you companye. Madame, sayde Arthur, as it shal plese you, I am content.

Than Florence went into her tent, & toke her mayster by the hand, and said: Master, ye told me trouth of Arthur; for he is fayre & gracyous, and y^e best knight of hys handes y^t is in all the worlde. Certenly, madam, all that is trouth, for all noblenes is in him. Well, maister, saide Florence, I loue you entyrelly; and also my lord, my father, loueth you right wel: and ye & I haue bene norissed vp toghether: so ye be mi mā & clerke, sworne of my streyght counsayl; therefore ye ought to owe me your faith & trouth, w^tout any treson or falsenes: and ye ought to help and to ayde me in al my busines. Certenly, madam, quod the mayster, al y^t ye say is of trouth: and so shal I do as longe as I lyue; for I shal kepe secrete your counsayle as long as I lyue. Certenly, mayster, sayd she, I haue great affyaunce in you: therefore it is

so, I wyl y^t ye shal know the secretes of my heart; therefore I require you kepe it close. It is so, I loue Arthur w^t al my hert, & I wyl loue hym aboue all other creatures of y^e worlde: for here I sweare faythfully to you, that as long as I lyue I wyl neuer haue lord nor spouse but al onely hym. And whan the mayster herde her saye so, he had ryght great ioy, and sayd: Madā, surely ye haue good cause thus to do, for he is the floure of all the worlde: and I shal helpe you to haue hym more than any other person of the world. But mayster, quod Florence, there is one thyng that I wold fayne know, of what lignage he is of. Certainly, madame, he is son vnto a mighty duke: for Bawdwyn, his squyer, hath shewed me so. That is suffycient, sayd Florence. And so they lefte theyr comunycacyon at that tyme, & departed.

Than was syr Rowland borne into his tent, & vnarmed. And the senesshall, & Brysebar, sir Ancell, and sir Myles, ledde Arthur to the senesshalles tent, & there was he vnarmed: & whan he had wasshed his handes & vysage, than brought Bawdewyn him a syrcote of scarlet, furred with ermynes, the which became him right wel: he was bygge & hye aboue all other, & coloured like the rede rose had bē set on the whyte lyly. Than he sayd he wolde go & se syr Rowlande; wherfore euerye man praysed him muche: & al the other barons wente thither w^t him; & there he was tyll it was past none. Than he toke his leue of syr Rowland, & yssued out into the felde. And than there was assembled all the nobles of the felde to beholde him: & they all sayd, how y^t he was the moost fayre creature of the worlde: we thinke he be sonne to a kynge: wold to God the fayre Florēce were his lady & spouse! And therwith he entred into the senesshalles tent, and he & sir Myles played togyther at the chesse: and by that tyme the Kynge of Orqueney, & Duke Phylp, his neuewe, were come, & were lyghted in the myddes of the medowe nere to Florence tent. And so he & Phylp, & well a xiiii. other knyghtes, wente streyght to Florēce tent; and there they founde her playenge with mayster Steuen. And whan Florence sawe the kyng, her cosin, and Duke Phylp, she did salute them, and enbraced and kyssed them, & sayd how they were welcome: & so

they made eche other great feest & joy, and sate downe on fayre new grene russhes, & talked together of many thinges. And at last the kynge demaunded of the mayster tydynges of Arthur. Syr, sayd the mayster, he is not ferre hens; he is in the seneschalles tent. A! madame, sayd the kynge, dyd ye not se hym nor speake with hym as yet? Yes, syr, sayd Florēce, I saw hym whan he dyd just agaynst syr Rowlande, who had appeled hym of falsenes, bycause of his cosyn, the Duke of Bygors neuewe. And I pray you, madame, sayd Phylp, how wente the justes bytwene them? Syr, there is two ribbes broken in sir Rowlandes syde, & one of hys armes broken asonder; for hys horse fell on him. In the name of God, said y^e kyng, he knew not as than Arthur, but now I trowe he knoweth some of hys strokes: therfore, madame, spede for y^t knyght, & be aqueynted w^t him; for there is no prynce in al the worlde but y^t wold be right glad to haue the noble company of hym. And as I vnderstande he hath offred hym selfe to be your knyght, therfore receyue hym & retayne hym in suche wyse that he escape not fro you; for ye can not tel what nede parauenture ye shal haue of hym here after. Cosyn, sayd Florence, ye say ryghte well: the mayster shal go for hym. And so he dyd. Than the kynge sayd to Duke Phylp, hys neuew: A! syr, where is become the good and faythfull company that ye promised to thys knyght, now that ye be here and knowe that he is so nere, and yet ye make none other semblaunt. Therwith syr Phylpype stepte forth after the mayster, for to go to Arthur: and as they yssued out of theyr tente, there entred the archebyssshop. Than the kynge and Florence rose, and dyd set downe the bysshop bytwene them.

CAP. LXXVI.

HOW THAT DUKE PHYLIP AND THE MAYSTER WENTE TO FETCHE
ARTHUR TO THE KYNGE OF ORQUENEY AND TO THE FAYRE
FLORENCE.

DUKE PHYLIP and the mayster entred into the senesshals tent, and there they founde Arthur playing wyth syr Miles. And whan Arthur saw Duke Philip, he went and embraced him, & sayd: Syr, ye be right herteli welcom. Sir, quod Duke Philip, and ye be also here wel foūd. Syr, sayde Arthur, where is the Kyng of Orqueneý? Certaynly, syr, he is wyth my lady Florence in her tent; and he desireth you to come to him. In the name of God, sayde Arthur, I praye to God sende hym right good aduenture. Go we thither. And so Duke Phylip and he wente hande in hande talkyng together: and the maister, the senesshal, syr Myles, syr Ancean, and Brysebar, went after them tyll they came to Florence tent. And whā Florence sawe Arthur, her herte began to tremble, and she sodēly blusshed: but there was none that toke hede thereto, for euery man toke regard to Arthur. And than the kyng and the archbisshop rose, and went and embraced hym, and made him right grete joye, and set hym downe by them. And than the kyng demaunded of hym, howe he had done syth the tyme he sawe hym last? And he answered, and said: Right wel, I thanke God and you. Than the kynge sayd to Florence: Madame, beholde here thys knyght; for, as God helpe me, I wolde it had cost me euery yere xii. thousande pound, on the condycyon that he were partaynyng to my house, and to be my companyon: and of thys I heartely did requyre hym at Argence: but he than answered me, that he had offred his seruyce to you to be your knyght; therefore, I say, there is nothinge that can be, but ladyes winneth al. Madame, ye haue him; wherof I am ryght ioyous, and it pleseth me ryght well: for, yf I had him, he sholde be yours at your comaūdemēt: ye be a hye & a puyssant lady, ther-

fore do him some good, & that shall be your honour. I promise him, said Florēce, I shal make hym a gret lord & a puissant. And she thought in her herte, that she would make him as gret a lord as she was a ladye. Madā, quod Arthur, I thanke your grace: & therwith he stode vpon his fete; & he had a gentyll body, both fayre & byg, and soo well proporcioned in all his members, y^t the more y^t Florence beheld him, the more he pleased her. There was no lady there, but that they wysshed that he had bene partaininge to their lordes & husbandes.

And as thei were talkyng thus togyther, there came to Florence a messēger fro her father, the King Emendus; and he shewed her how y^t he dyd hertely comaund hym to her, and desyred her to go hastily to dynere, for he was comyng, and wyll lodge the same nighte nere to her tente. Than Florence made semblaunt as though she had bene glad of hys comyng: how be it, she was not content in her hert with his hasty comyng, for she had thoughte to haue spoken w^t Arthur after diner: and thā she repented her y^t she had not spoken w^t hym at good leyser syth he came. Than went she to dynere: & the King of Orquenei and the byshop sate downe together, and Florence in y^e myddes of the table, and Duke Philip and Arthur sate downe together, and so al other barons, & they wer ryght rychely serued. And by that time y^e tentes and paulion of Kyng Emendus were come, and pyght vp not far fro Florence tent. Thā there came squiers and officers by gret companyes: and euery mā, in his owne offyce, dyd theyr payn to make all thyng redy agenst the kynges comyng: for the kyng was comyng righte nere. And whan the Kyng of Orquenei had dyned, he mounted on his horse, and Duke Philip, and the bysshop, and Arthur, and all other barons and knightes: & all they did as moche honour to Arthur as they coude do. And thus they rode forth, tyl at the last they encoūtered Kyng Emendus, who had in his company two M. horses. Than the Kyng of Orquenei and the archebysshop dyde salute the kyng, and so rode nere him, and the kyng betwene them bothe. Than Philip and Arthur came togyder: and Philip dyde salute the kyng ryght swetely. And so than Duke Philip & Arthur rode forthe before

the kynge, and Duke Philip helde his hande euer on Arthurs sholdre, and Florence senesshall, & syr Myles, & syr Brysebar, & syr Ansell, rode euer aboute hym, & made to hym ryght great ioye. And at the laste Kynge Emendus perceyued Arthur, and sawe how all y^e ioye was made bycause of hym: & he sawe well howe that he was a ryght goodly knight. Than the kynge demaunded of the archebyssshop, his broder, and of the Kinge of Orqueney, what knyght he mighte be that Duke Phylp helde so moche company withall? By my fayth, syr, sayde the byssshop, he is a ryghte gracious knyght & a chyualrous of hys dedes: and there shewed the kynge how that he had justed with syr Rowlande, and howe that he ouerthrewe hym horse and all to the earth. Than the King of Orqueney sayd: Syr, it is the same knyght y^t ye haue herde so moche honour and hye prowesse reputed of. Saynt Mary! sayd the kynge, I am ashamed y^t I haue made him no better semblaūt than I haue done: therefore, for Goddes sake, cause hym to come to me. Than syr Moraus, who was senesshall vnto the kynge, wente for him. Than Arthur retourned, & wente to the kynge, & dyde of hys bonet. And than the Kinge of Orqueney put Arthur bytwene him & Kynge Emendus. Than the king said to him: Syr, ye be righte hertely welcome into this my countre: &, syr, for Goddes sake be not myscontent thoughe I haue made none other semblaūt to you or this tyme. Syr, & it lyke your grace, sayd Arthur, there is none suche cause, but I am alwaies at your commaūdement to the vttermost of my small power. Well, Arthur, said the kinge; I thynke that is youre name; I requyre you be of oure cōpany, & be on our partye at this tournay ayenst the Emperour of Ynde. Syr, sayde the Kynge of Orqueney, he is all redy on your syde, syth he is retayned w^t my ladye Florence, your doughter, who hathe promised to do moche for hym. Well, sayd the kyng, that she accomplissheth not, I shall fulfyl.

Thus they were talking togyder tyll they came to the kynges tent, & there he alyghted fro his horse, & entred into his paulyon: the Kynge of Orqueney, the byssshop, Phylp, & Arthur, folowed after the kynge. Than the kynge cōmaūded that there shold be a

ryche paulyon pyghte vp ioyninge to his, for Arthur to lodge in : for he would haue hym nere to his persone as longe as the turnay endured. And therwith came Florēce to se the kynge her fader. Than the kynge rose, & enbraced her, and set her downe bytwene hym and the Kynge of Orquenei. And her fader demaunded of her howe she dyde? And she answered, & sayd : Syr, ryght well, I thanke your grace. Than she sawe wher as the bysshop helde Arthur by the hāde, wherof she was right ioyous in her hert. And by that tyme the Kynge of Mormal, and the Kynge of Valefounde, & the Kinge of Ismaelyte, and syr Olyuer, and all the other twelue peres, were come in to the felde, for they were all partaynyng to the Kynge Emendus. And so they came where as he was. Than there was great ioye and feast made, for than the courte was noble and great. Than the mayster made great ioye of the Kyng of Valefoud, for he was his father : and he, in like case, was glad to se hys sonne. And all these kynges had wel in their company, at the least, a thousand knightes : and they wer all lodged aboute the medowe, the whyche lodgyng endured well the space of two leges. Thus the king, & Florence, and all other, made together ryght great ioy and myrthe in the kynges paulion. And the Kynge of Orquenei helde Florence in his armes, and sayd : Fayre lady, my nece, here shal be sene noble chivalrye done w'in these thre dayes for your sake. Truly, cosyn, saide Florence, here shal be some y^t I had rather were hens. Certainly, madame, sayd the kyng, so goeth the worlde ; some to pleasure, and some to anoyaūce. Than he sayde to Kyng Emendus : Syr, beholde here in myne armes a ryche tresure : he that shal haue her ought to kepe and cherysse her ryght derelye. As God helpe me, sayde the kyng, a ryche man, & a noble, and a puyssaunt, shall haue her, who is themperour of Ynde y^e More. And whan Arthur herde that, he was so sore dysplesed in hys herte, that he could speke no worde of a great season for all the golde of the worlde, nor though hys lyfe had layne in ieopardy thereof. Syr, sayd Florence, parauentur themperour loueth an other better than me, than he wyll let me go.

Than mayster Steuen rose vp amonge them all, & sayde to the

kinge: Syr, noble and puyssant king aboue al other, I requyre your grace of a lytel audience here before your grace & all the xii. peres of Soroloys, & before al other y^t be here present; for I trust that my saying shall turne you bothe to profyte & to great honour. Than sayd the kyng: I am content that ye speke. Syr, sayd the mayster, it is of trouth y^t there is no creature y^t ought to loue any thyng so well as hys owne propre fleshe and bloud; the which euery man shold loue & holde ryght derely, according to the profyt of the soule, & sauegard of the body, & honour of the person: for he that loueth not his owne, loueth folyschly: for I say these wordes because of my ladye Florence, here presente, who is of your fleshe & bloud, for she is your owne propre doughter. It is of trouth ye are desyrus to assure & to mari her to y^e honour of your person, and to the honor and profyte of al your noble relme, wherin ye doo ryghte nobly, for it is hye tyme. I say not agenst it: how be it, ryght hye and myghty prynce! in doying of thys, ye oughte to regarde and considre these iii. thinges, that I haue shewed your grace here before; that is to say, to the profyt of the soule, to the sauegard of the bodi, and to the honour of her, and of you, and of al your relme. Fyrst, as to the profyt of the soule; ye ought to regard to whome y^t ye wyl gyue her in mariage, & to se that it be not agenst her hert, so that she shall haue none occasion to hate him y^t she shal haue: but that it be to the plesure of her hert and contentaciō of her mynd: for yf it be agenst her hert, than shal she hate him, & so shall there neuer be rest, nor peace, nor good loue betwene thē; the whyche shall turne to deadly syn, because of the hate & grete rumour y^t shal be betwene thē: and so this shold be yl for her soul. And, secōdly, syr, ye ought to regard y^e sauegarde of her body: for ye know wel, how y^t my lady, your doughter, is both yong & tendre, & hath bē euer swetely brought vp: wherfore it is no nede to send her into a straūge sauage cōuntry, where as the ayre & regyon is contrary to her nature and sauegarde of her body. She is a hye & a myghty lady in her owne cōutre, what nede is it than to sende her ony ferther? And yf ye gyue her suche a husbande as wyll lede her into a ferre straunge countre, & paraenture she loueth

hym not, but inwardly dooth hate him : what is a worse malady to the body than hate & dyspleasure, & can not remedy it ? So, syr, than yf the coultre be ayenst her nature, and also that she hate hym that she must abyde with, I repute than my lady in a maner as deed. And thyrdly, syr, ye oughte to regarde the honour of her, and also of youre selfe, and of all your countre, in consyderynge how y^t maryage made agaynst hearte and good accorde oftentymes hath an yll ende : for yf my lady, youre doughter, who is ryght noble and puyssaunt, & ryche of hauoyre and of londes, and also she hathe frendes ryghte hye and doubtable : yf she shoulde be encompained by maryage to ony persone that shoulde be ayenst her herte and wyll, (her herte that is so gentyl, the whiche can suffre nothyng ayenst her wyll,) I fere me that she shall doo some thyng ayenst hym or ayenst hys, the which shal not sowne to her honour, nor yet to yours : therfore, syr, it is cōuenyent that ye regard and consyder all thys. And, syr, I saye bycause ye haue sayd that bothe noble and ryche shall haue her, who is themperour of Ynde the More ; syr, I know well that my lady dooth hate hym so moche, that, by her wyl, she wold neuer se him more, nor neuer to here spekyng of him : how be it, ye wyll nedes that she shall haue hym, she dare not dysplease your grace : wherfore I fere me that yf she haue hym, that all these sayd thinges shall fortune, and perauenture worse ; the whiche should be great pitie. And also, syr, ye knowe well that it is a longe season agone that ther was wrytyng made & sealed by you, & by all the xii. peres of your realme, y^t she shoulde neuer haue none other creature in marriage but all onely hym that the ymage should giue vnto the chaplet : and as yet there was neuer none that assayed it : & now, syr, here is come all your chyualry ; therfore holde on forth your tournay, and let se to whome the pryse shall be gyuen. And than, syr, let themperour, & all y^e other kynges and noble knyghtes, come to the paulyon where as the ymage is ; and to whome so euer that she gyue the chaplet, lette him enioye it with moche honoure.

Than the Kynge of Mormall rose, who was ryghte aunceyent and a wyse prynce, and moost preuyest of the kynges counseyle,

and sayd: Syr, it is trouth I am your man, & holde all my realme of you; therefore I owe vnto you fayth and trouth, & also vnto my lady, your doughter. And, syr, for trouth I wyll bere witnesse and the mayster hath sayd to you well and truly: for, syr, yf it be so, that ye haue put to your seale, and were of that accorde, and also all these other kynges that be here present, and also all the xii. peres of youre realme; syr, I saye that ye, & also all they, oughte to abyde fermely by your seales and accorde, as good kynges ought to do. And whan that the Kinge Emēdus had well vnderstande alle these sayenges, he knewe well how that they said trouth: and soo he answered, and sayde: Syrs, I knewe well how that ye haue said right well and nobly: but it is so, that I haue promysed so faythfully to this emperour, that I doubte me, yf that I breke my promesse with hym, that he wyll appele me of falsenes, and soo make mortall warre against me. Than the Kyng of Orqueney said: Syr, yf that the emperour wyll moue any war agenst you, by my heade he shall be answered ryght sharpely and soone! for, syr, comaund ye youre men of war to be ready on youre parte, and we shall do our deuoyres on our behalues; and so I trust we shall shewe hym suche a sight, that he shal be sore encombred w^t lokyng or numbryng of them. And yf he will haue batayle one knight agēst an other, in y^t quarel I am here redy, and wyl be, to accomlishe that batayl, for my lady, your doughters sake. Thā Arthur rose vp, and sayd aloude, so y^t euery mā myght wel here him: Noble & gentyl kyng! it is no reason that ye shold aduenture your bodi agenst a knight & ye a kyng; but, yf my ladye should haue nede, ye shall not lacke of a knyght: for beholde me here, who is, and euer shal be, redy to do any thyng that she shall commaunde me. And so euery man there beheld hym, for he was maruaylous fayre, & he had on his syrcote of skarlet, y^e whyche became hym wondersly well, y^e whiche plesed muche King Emendus and al other. Than Kyng Emendus sayde: Syr, I se wel how ye be a worthy knyght, and therefore, syr, yf any batail be in this case, I gyue you graunt that ye shal accomplysh it. Therwith Arthur kneled down, and ryghte humbly thanked hym. Thā the Kyng of Orqueney toke Arthur

by the hande, and caused hym to syt downe betwene hym and Florence; wherewyth somewhat she abashed: and as than the two louers durst make no greatesemblaunt together one to another.

CAP. LXXVII.

HOW A GREAT & A PUYSSANT KNIGHT DEFYED ARTHUR, BECAUSE HE SATE BY FLORENCE AND DYD PUL DOWNE A CORNER OF HER KEUERCHefe, THE WHICH THE WYNDE HAD BLOWEN VP; AND SO ARTHUR DYD JUSTE WYTH HYM, AND DYD CASTE HYM TO THE EARTH SO RUDELYE, THAT HE WAS NOT ABLE TO LEPE ON HORSBACK FYE MONETHES AFTER.

So it was, y^e as y^e King of Orqueny, & Florence, & Arthur, sat together, as ye haue herde before, there entred into the paulyon a great knyght, black of vysage, & he was gyrt wth a greete swerd & a longe, & bare a great fawchon in hys hand: & so he came before the kyng, & saluted hym, and al other, as he y^e was come fro themperour, who as than had pight vp his tentes at y^e one end of the medow; who said: Syr Kyng Emendus, I tel you themperour of Ynde wyl be here to morow betymes, for gladly he would speke wth you, as wth hym y^e he entyrelly loueth. Thā the king said: Syr, he shal be welcom, & to morow I wyl go to him: but, syr, quod y^e kyng, I pray you, what people hath he? Syr, sayd y^e knight, he is wel to y^e nūbre of vi. M. knightes & squyers, ryght hardy & valiaūt. In the name of God, said y^e king, that is a fayre cōpany. Than this knyght behelde the Kyng of Orqueny & Arthur, who were talkīg wth Florence: & he sawe how Arthur dressed downe one of the corners of her keuerchefe aboute her necke, the whiche had ben blowen vp a lytell wth the winde, wherewith y^e knight was sore displeased, & said to Arthur: Syr knight, fayre ladies are moche bounde to you, for ye can apparayle &

araye ladyes right wel: thei haue of you a good varlet to be in their chambres; for ye cā brusshe theyr gownes, & bete theyr furies ryghte well. Well, syr, sayd Arthur, ye maye saye your pleasure; it pleaseth me ryghte well, and not al only for your sake, but bicause I haue great ioye if I might do any thing that might be to their pleasures. What, syr, quod the knight, I beleue your fader was a preest, for ye can right well preche: certainly it is for no good y^t ye drawe so nye to y^t lady. Why frēde, quod Arthur, & ye thiike any yll in the mater, speke it, & remedy it & ye can. Syr, quod the knyght, I thynke y^t ye haue forfeyte with your neyghboure. Than mayster Steuen sayd: Syr knyght, ye be not wyse thus here to reporte vylany of my lady; for ye saye y^t she hath forfeyte with this knight; for he can not forfeyte with her, but y^t she must be accorded with him: therfore herein ye report vilany of theim bothe. Than Arthur stept vp in great displeasure, & said to the knyghte: Syr, yf ye grudge with any thing in your herte, shewe it shortly. Syr, said y^e knight, with a right good wyll, with a spere or two with you here without in this fayre medowe. Hasarde might he haue that refuseth you, sayd Arthur. Than the knyght desyred of the kinge to haue armure, and sayde: Syr, I wyll stryke of the heed of this knyght, or it be nyght. Mary, said the Kynge of Orqueney, than shal ye be yll welcome hyther.

Soo these ii. knyghtes armed them, & wente forth into the felde. Than the Kynge Emendus went out of his tent, & so dyde al other, to se y^e justes bytwene them: & the archebyssshop helde Florence by the hande. Than one deliuered a great spere to Arthur; but it plesed him not, & demaūded a bygger: & so than there was brought to him suche a spere, that should haue greatly encōbred an other knyght to haue borne it all onely; & that Arthur dyd because he was displeased w^t the knyght, & also bycause he wyst well y^t al the hole noble cōpany of kīges & knyghtes should se whether he had honour or shame: & specially bicause the noble Florence shold behold him: & so theirwith these knyghtes ran togyder rudely: & the knight strake Arthur so vertuously, that his spere sheuered all to peces; & Arthur

strake him so rudely in the myddes of his shelde, y^t he claue it asonder in two peces, wherwith he made him to tourne his heles vpwarde, & brast asonder y^e arson of his sadel, & paytrelles and gyrthes went clene asonder, & knight & all went to the erth in suche wyse, y^t with the fal y^e knight was brused, so y^t he was not able to lepe on horsebacke of vi. monthes after, & so lay a great season in a swoone, y^t euery man had wende he had ben deed. And whan Florence sawe y^t, she was neuer so ioyful before, & said to her selfe: This knight ought right well to be in the loue of a right hie & a puissaūt damoyzell. Than the Kynge Emendus had great meruaile fro whence y^t suche strokes sholde come, & said: Syr knyghte, what so euer ye be, God encrease your honour; for as for boūte & valyauntnes, ye haue sufficient all redy. Than all the other kinges praysed hym moche; & eche of thē wished that he were pertayninge to theyr houshold. Thā the Kynge of Orqueney ran streight to Arthur and embraced hym, and said: A! dere frend! ye haue rendred to this knight of suche seruyce, suche gouerdon; and so toke & ledde him into his tent, and there he was vnarmed. Than Kynge Emendus caused the knyght, whā he was receiued, to be borne into syr Rowlandes tent, to bere hym cōpany. And whan syr Rowland knew all this, how y^t he had justed wyth Arthur, & howe he had spedde, he had so greate joye, that nere hande he was therby all hole of his hurtes, & sayd to the knyght: Syr, ye be hertely welcome, for ye haue founde my phisicyon: syr, the letuary y^t he hath giuē you to drynke, is full stronge: I trowe there be therin more bitternes than swetenes; therefore, frende, come on to me, & kepe wel your clothes as I do mine. Than the knyght said: Syr, how is it w^t you? for, as for me, I ensure you I am sore dyseased. At whiche wordes all y^t were there dyd laugh; y^e whyche sayenge was tolde to Kynge Emēdus, wherat he had great sporte. So Arthur wente to the pauilion y^t the kynge had made to be ordeyned for hym; & Florence, & the bysshop, & mayster Steuen, went to her tent. Than she toke y^e mayster apart, & said: Mayster, how say ye by Arthur? is he not a vertuous knyght & a valyaūt aboue all other? Thinke ye y^t he hath ony loue towarde me? Ye truly, madame, I knowe

well, more than to any creature lyuyng. A! than, gentyll mayster! quod Florēce, fynde some meanes y^t he & I might speke together: for I wolde fayne know somewhat of his herte by his owne reporte. Madame, quod the mayster, I wyl do what I can, & y^t shal be to morow after souper; & soo as for y^t night they departed: & euery bodye went to rest, tyll the next mornynge that the kinge & all other were vp.

CAP. LXXVIII.

HOW FLORENCE & ARTHUR SPAKE TOGETHER AT GOOD LEYSER AT THE ENDE OF THE FOREST, & THERE PROMISED ECHE TO LOUE OTHER; & THERE THE QUENE PROSERPYNE APPERED TO THEM, AND SHEWED TO FLORENCE HOW THAT ARTHUR LOUED HER TRULY; AND HOW THAT THEY SHOULD HAUE ECHE OTHER BY THE WAYE OF MARYAGE: BUT FYRST THEY SHOULD ENDURE GREAT PAYNE AND TROUBLE.

IN the next mornynge the kyng arose and apparayled hym selfe to go and mete the Emperoure: but Florence wolde not go, nor suffre none of her companye to goo, sauynge all onely mayster Steuen: and that was to the entent to speke wyth Arthur. So thus rode forth King Emēdus and all hys company: & Arthur rode talkynge wyth the Kyng of Orqueney: & so than the mayster came & dyd salute them, and they hym. Than the mayster sayd to Arthur in couſeyle: Syr, my lady Florence doth salute you by me, as she y^t wolde to you bothe honour & profyte. A! mayster, sayd Arthur, I praye to God send her as moche honoure and welth as I wolde to myne owne propre persone; for truly she is a lady of great honour: & I am greatly dyspleased in my herte, y^t the kyng hath made me to ryde wyth hym: for now I may not se her grace; the whyche greueth me right sore. Why, sayd the

mayster, wolde ye than gladly se her? Ye, syr, quod Arthur, gladlier than either father or mother: and yet I am sure they wolde be gladde to se me. Than I beleue, said the maister, that whan ye se her, yet wolde ye be gladder to speke with her. Syr, truly mayster I had neuer so great joy as I shuld haue, if I myght come to speke wyth her grace: but I se well that wyll not be. Well, Arthur! frende! sayd the mayster, loue ye wel than to speke with her? A! mayster, ye haue made couenaunt with me or thys y^t I shuld speke wyth her: but I se well ye haue forgotten it: but & ye wolde do it, I wolde be your knyght. Well, syr, and I cause you to speke wyth her in pryete or it be nyght, wyl ye than gyue me a gyfte that I shall demaūde of you? Gyue you, mayster! sayd Arthur; ye truly! and what so euer ye demaunde of me, & it be the heed of thys emperoure that is here comynge; for and ye wyll I shal go stryke it of incontynent. Certaynly, syr, said the maister, it shal not cost you so moche; for my demaunde is no more, than yf I fynde the meanes that ye shal haue in maryage the noble Florence, wyl ye than agayne fynde the wayes y^t I may haue the fayre lady Margarete of Argenton by the way of maryage, who is at the Porte Noyre; for I loue her wyth all myne entyer herte? And whan Arthur herde y^t, he was neuer soo joyfull before, & enbraced hym with all his herte, and demaunded of hym whether he had onye comforte of her, or not? And he answered, that he trusted ryght well to spede, & the rather by his meanes. Well, mayster, sayd Arthur, yf she be ones agreed to you, feare no man lyuynge that should take her fro you, as longe as I am able to ryde or goo, but that he shall lese hys heed in the quarell. Sir, sayd the maister, I hertely thanke you: and, syr, I shall tell you what ye shall doo thys nyghte, after souper: kepe your selfe in your tent close, and goo not to the courte: & than I shall come to you, and bryng wyth me the lady Florence, & there ye shal speke wyth her at good leyser: but than be ye noo thyng abasshed, but humbly desyre her loue and fauoure in all goodly maner, and habandon your selfe in all poyntes to be her knyght: but though that she make it straunge & deny you at the fyrst, yet be not ashamed therwith, & she shall loue you the better: wher-

by ye shall the rather deserue her grace; for than she shal know that of great hardynes and valure of hearte it is come on you to take in hande so hye an enterpryse. Gentyll mayster! sayd Arthur, thynke on this, and I shal be your knyght. Well, syr, sayd the mayster, I wyll departe fro you as now, bicause none should mistrust our talkyng.

Than the mayster rode forth into the company of the Kyng of Valefoūd, his father; and Arthur rode into the company of Duke Phylp. And Kyng Emendus rode forth so longe, tyll at the last he encountred themperoure: and there they made great chere eche to other, & soo rode togyther cheke by cheke tyl they came to theyr tentes. And than the prestes were redy to go to masse; & so they herde masse all togyder. Than, after masse, themperour beyng in his tent with King Emēdus, and all other nobles that were there assembled at that time; thā King Emēdus sayd to hym: Syr, it hath bene, or this tyme, agreed and accorded with all these foure kynges, & all these xii. peres of my realme, as well by othe & assuraunce, as by sealyng of certaine charters made & affermed of the same couenaūtes, that no creature shoulde haue my doughter Florence in maryage but al only that persō that the ymage, who is in Florence paulyon, shold giue vnto the chaplet that she holdeth in her handes; for soo it is destenyed: wherfore & it please you, whan the tournay is done, ye shal go to the ymage, and I byleue she wyll gyue it you, & yet our othes & assuraunce kepte & vpholde. Verily, syr, sayde themperour, I am well content; thinking surely to haue had the chaplet. Well, syr, sayde the kynge, ye haue brought hither moche people, & also we haue a great cōpany with vs: wherfore I fere that yf we should tournay togider all at ones, that there shold be done moche hurte; wherby here after shold ensue great hatred & enuy: wherfore me thynketh best, that one of your barōs take in hande the tournay as to morowe, with a thousande knyghtes in his company; & I shal set one of my knyghtes ayenst him with as many in his company: and so let vs do all foure daies, one after an other: and I thinke this is a better waye than all to fyght at ones. Certaynly, syr, sayde themperour, ye saye ryght well; & all this pleaseth me.

Thā stepte forth the Erle of the Yle Perdue, where as Gouvernar had ben with the countesse all night, & he desyred of themperour that he might haue the tournay the fyrste daye: the whyche themperour dyde graunt him w^t a good herte. Than came forth the Kinge of Orquency, and he desyred of Kynge Emendus to answere the erle the same daye: & he had graūt of his request. And the King of Orquency toke Arthur & Gouvernar by theyr handes, and sayde: Syrs, I retayne you ayenst to morowe to be on my party. And whan therle of the Yle Perdue sawe Gouvernar, he made to hym ryghte greate chere. Than Kynge Emendus toke leue of themperour; & so euery man departed in to theyr owne tentes.

Than the Kynge of Orquency wente aboute and dyde chose oute suche knyghtes as he wold haue, tyl it was tyme to go to their dyner. Than was water brought forth: & so than euery man wente to the courte who y^t would. Than the King Emendus and the other foure kynges were set at the great table, and Duke Phylp & Arthur were set next them: & there they were richely serued, and made great feest and ioye. And whan all the clothes were taken vp, than Kynge Emendus & the other foure kynges sate them downe togyder on a clothe of sylke. And the Kynge of Orquency toke Arthur by the hande, to whome he made ryghte greate ioye, and bare to him moch honour. And as they thus talked togyder, there came to theim the archebyssshop. Than mayster Steuen stode before the kynge, & sayde: Syr, my lady Florence, your doughter, hath sēte me to you; for she hath herde saye, howe that the Kynge of Orquency hath taken on him the tournay as to morowe, ayenst the Erle of the Yle Perdue; &, syr, bycause she knoweth well how that themperour hath many good knyghtes, therfore, syr, yf it please you, she wold lepe on her palfrey as to morow, and come and se the tournay & playe of these good knyghtes. In the name of God, sayde the King of Valefoūde, my lady shal do right well in her so doynge: and I am sure the kynge wyll gyue her lycence. Syr, truly with a ryght good wyll, sayd the kynge, syth it pleaseth you: but I doubte me moche that the hete shall anoy her; and also the grete prese of horses &

knyghtes shal trouble her. Well, syr, sayd the mayster, of that she shall be taken good hede of: and, syr, my lady desyareth also that Arthur, her newe retayned knyght, myghte tournay to morowe ayenst them without, for she wyll se hym tournay: & she wyll sende to be of his route, her senesshall, syr Brysebar, syr Ansell, & syr Miles of Valefoūde: and so she wyll knowe to morowe what all these knyghtes wyll do. It pleaseth me ryght well, sayd the kinge. And whan Arthur herde that, he had great ioye, and sayd: I am all at the commaundement of my lady; and I thanke her grace that it hath pleased her to retayne me for one of her knyghtes, for in dede so I am, & wyll be euermore. Well, sayd the mayster, sythe it is so that Arthur shall be to morowe in my ladyes route, it shall be good that he go & sporte him with them, to be acquainted with them, & to speke and comyn togyder: for by kepyng of company togyder, moche loue is attayned. In the name of God, said the Kyng of Orqueney, all this is but well sayd: go your waye wyth him, and acqueynt ye him with these other noble knyghtes: & he thought in himselfe y^t Florence would gladly se hym: and that he perceyued wel syth y^e time y^t he caused hym to syt downe by her; for than he perceyued somewhat her lowly countenaūce to hymwarde; and also Kynge Emendus was content y^t he shold go: how be it, the mayster made noo great haste, bycause y^t none shold mystrust him. Than the King of Orqueney said to Arthur: Syr, take your leue of the king, and of other; & so he dyde. Than the mayster went straye to the senesshalles tent, who made hym ryght grete chere. And whā that al other knyghtes knew that he was ther, thei made to him grete sygne of loue, and desyred him y^t he would not depart out of theyr company: and so he promysed them to do.

Thā the maister wente to the fayre Florence, and sayd: Madame, Arthur is come to your senesshalles tent: the kynge hath sent hym thyder to sporte him. Than her herte lept for ioye, and sayd: A! maister! & whan shal I than se him? Madame, said the maister, he is as now in the company of your noble barons, who doeth gretely feest him: &, as yet, to cause him to come fro thē, in my mynde, it wer not wel done; but, madame, goo to your souper

this nyght somewhat betymes, & then sende for your barons, & commaūde them to make thē redy ayenst the mornynge to tournay in the company of Arthur: & than whan they be departed fro you, in the meane season that thei be aboute theyr besynes, ye shal go playe you in the entre of this forest amonge the fayre grene okes, & thyder shal I brynge hym to you. Ye saye ryght well, said Florence; so be it. Than she commaunded to haste her souper, and so wente therto betymes. And Arthur all that season was with the seneshall: & all the other knightes, for the loue of hym, made great joye & feest tyll souper was past. Than mayster Steuen sayde to Florence: Madame, I wyll goo to your knyghtes and cause thē to come to you, and than shortly loke that ye delyuer them; and than goo ye thider as I haue shewed you, & in y^e meane tyme I shal kepe company with Arthur. Go youre waye, dere frende! sayde Florence, and cause them to come to me; for I thynke very longe tyl I haue delyuered them.

Than the mayster departed fro her, and went to the senesshals tente; and there he found, as than, al the barons wasshyng of theyr handes, talkyng of wyues, and laughynge at syr Brysebar, because he sayd he loued better to be stryken, than to stryke an other: for he sayde, it greatly anoyed hym the dyshonoure or myschyefe of an other: for he was of the opynyon, y^t he could not be stryken without hys wyfe were yll: for he sayd, that yf ylnes were ones mounted vp intoo the hert of a woman, it were harde to withdrawe her fro her enterpryse; and yf his wyfe dyd yll, the shame therof is to her and to her lygnage, and not to hym: for he should be angry and displeased wyth her yll dedes or vylany. And whan they sawe the mayster, they ran too hym on all partyes, and played with hym ryght swetely. Than the senesshal demaunded of hym what tydynge? And he answered, and sayde: Lordes! my ladye Florence wold fayne speke with you incontynent; therefore go your wayes shortely to her: but, for Goddes sake, tary not longe wyth her, for she is a lytel dyseased in her head: go your wayes, and I shal kepe company wyth Arthur in the meane season: he and I wyl go walke togyther.

Than al these lordes and knyghtes apparayled them, and wente

to Florence. And than she commaunded them that they should make all thyng redye agaynst the nexte day for the tournay, and that they shold kepe cōpany with Arthur as their chiefe capytayne that day. Than her senesshal sayd: Madame, than it is nedefull for vs to returne to our lodgynges to make all thynges redy. In Goddes name, sayd Florence, go on youre wayes: and so they departed: and, in the meane season, maister Steuen led Arthur into the wood. And whan Florence hadde delyuered all her knyghtes, she called to her the Quene of Orqueney, in whome she trusted aboue al other, and two other damoysselles, and sayd to them: Fayre ladyes! let vs goo a lytel into yonder wood to sporte vs, for I haue a lytel payne in my head. Madame, let vs go, sayd the Quene of Orqueney. And so they two wente toward the forest talkyng together, and the other two damoysselles came after: and at the last thei came vnder the shadow of the fayre grene okes, and there they sate them down. And the mayster and Arthur were in the forest not farre fro them. And at the last Florence and the quene perceyued them. Than the quene sayd: Madame, I se yonder the mayster, & an other knyghte wyth hym, but I wote not who it is. And Florence answered, & sayd: Madame, that is trouth: I am glad that I se them, for I haue a lytell to speake with the mayster: therefore, madame, reste you here a lytell whyle, & I wyl go and speake with him. Madame, sayd the quene, by your lycence, I must also depart, & go speake wyth the countesse of the Yle Perdue, who is come to this tourney: therefore I wil go to her, and than the mayster may come to you. In Goddes name, sayde Florence, so be it.

Than the quene departed, & the mayster and Arthur came to Florence, and so set them downe togyder. Than the mayster sayd: Madame, beholde here your knight and true loue. Mayster, sayde Florence, he is ryght hertely welcome; for hys comyng pleaseth me ryght well. Madame, sayd Arthur, God gyue you as muche honour & ioy, as I wold to the person that I loue best of al the world. Madam, quod the mayster, as God helpe me, I am in certayne y^t he would you more honour than any persone lyuynge; for ye haue his hert and faithful loue more than any creature

of the worlde: and, madame, to proue that this is true, enquiryre of him the trouth, & he is so gentyll and meke, that he cannot hyde his mynde fro you: and, madame, I praye you be not dyspleased, for I muste nedes goo speke with my lady, the Quene of Orqueney: and soo he rose & wente hys waye, and lefte Florence and Arthur togyder. Than Florence demaunded of Arthur of whens he was? And he answered, and sayd: Madame, and it lyke your grace, I am of the realme of Fraūce. And of what lygnage be ye come? sayde Florence: I requyre you tell me the trouthe. Madame, sayd he, ye be so hye a person, that I ought not to hyde any thing fro your grace. Madame, know ye for trouth, that I am the all only son of the Duke of Britayne. That is noble ynough, said Florence: but, by y^e fayth that ye owe to me, who is the persō of the world that ye loue best, and would haue her loue and acqueyntaunce? Is she in your countre, or elles where? Shewe me the trouth, & hyde nothing fro me, I requyre you; & what she is that ye would be moost ioyous to haue her loue: name her to me, by the fayth that ye owe to all the sacramentes of holy chyrche. Madame, sayd Arthur, I requyre your grace to pardon me; for she may be such a person, that yf I should name her ye would perauenture thinke in me grete foly, for she may be suche one that she wyl not set her hert in so lowe a place; nor yet, I thinke, scant wyll here me: therefore it is better to me to be styll than to speke foly. Truly, said Florēce, that is had in the herte, is had in the mouth & speche: therfore shewe me wherder ye loue any lady or damoyseil in all the worlde, or not? Madame, truely I loue one as faythfully as herte of man can thinke. Ye! said Florence; but dooth she knowe that ye loue her? As God helpe me, madame, naye. Why, spake ye neuer to her of y^e mater? No truly, madame, sayd Arthur. And how is it that ye loue her & neuer shewed her therof? In that it should seme to me that ye loued her not; for it is moch payne for the mouth to retain and kepe close the feruent wyll of the herte; for lyghtly the desyre of the hert putteth outwarde the word of the mouth, as the wynde putteth away the smoke: & howe should she knowe that ye loue her, and it be not shewed her? And yf she loue you wythout speking eche of you to other, what ioye

shall there be bytwene you, if your hertes know not the willes eche of other? As moche auayleth two shouelles in a dicke, and no man to werke with them, as two persons to loue togider and none of them to speke to other: therfore, Arthur, shewe me surely, yf she y^t ye loue woulde gyue you audyence, should it any thyng touche you on the quicke, or not? Madame, I shall tell you the trouth: as God helpe me, spekyng with her that I loue should gretely recomforte me; for the salutacion that ye sente me thys laste daye by the mayster was more ioyefull to me, than to haue had all the worldes tresour. Why doo ye set so moche by that message, or why doo ye loue it so moche? Madame, for the loue of you that dyde sende it to me. Arthur, than me thynketh ye haue loue to me. Madame, as God helpe me, y^t is trouth, more than to any other persone of the world. Well, Arthur, by the faith that ye owe vnto your baptism, is ther no loue in you that surmounteth this loue that ye haue to me? Shewe me the very trouth. No, madame, by the faythe that I owe vnto God, neyther to fader nor moder, nor to any other personne of the world. And wold ye, sayd Florence, be glad and I loued you agayne? A! dere lady! I haue neuer had, nor can not haue, so great ioy. Well, sayd Florence, it is but foly that ye haue sette your herte on me, for yf I loued you agayne, ye sholde be shortly slayne yf it were knowen; for ye may se here this emperour, who doth greatly enforce hym to haue me, and he is a gret man bothe of hauyour and of frendes: and also my lorde and father, and al these other foure kinges, wyl al runne on you to sle you: therfore, Arthur, aduise you wel, for whan one begynneth a mater, it is great wysdome to regarde and beholde what ende it wyl come vntoo; and the ende of thys enterpryse is but your deth. Madame, sayde Arthur, for all that, yf I knew it should please your grace, I wolde care for nothyng elles: for I woulde neyther dout emperour nor kyng, yf I had your noble accorde; for yf there were any that wolde make any busynes in that case, I should shew hym, or this yere wente out, more than an hundreth thousand bright sheldes oute of Fraunce; nor they should not haue so stronge a castell or citie, but that I wolde brynge it down to the harde earth. Why,

sayd Florence, for to haue me, woulde ye or durst ye thā begyn war agenst so many noble and hye, riche and myghty persones as be here? Haue ye so good a herte or hardynesse? Madame, ye truely, by the fayth that I owe vnto you, and it were agenst all the world: Arthur, frend, sayd Florence, I can not se the maner howe ye myght haue me: but youre thought in this matter may be to your damage, or paraenture deth may happely come to you shortly; therefore, good frende, wythdrawe your loue, and than doo ye wysely; and because such a man as ye be, hath thoughte to loue so hye a person as I am, I wyll make to you amendes for your good wyll: therefore I gyue to you the Porte Noyre, the whych ye haue acheued, wyth xx. thousande pounce of yerely lond, and leue ye this foly as in louing of me, for ye shall fynde ynough besyde. Why, madam, wyl ye than gyue me lond and goodes to thentente that I shoulde leue louyng of your grace? Certainly, madame, I wyl none of youre londes: I loue you wyth al my herte, and wil neuer take it from you. I care not for your rychesse, where as I should lese your loue; for I thanke God I am riche ynough: for, as God helpe me, yf I myght haue youre loue, I wolde desire no more welth in all this world. Well, Arthur, sayde Florence, is this than surely your mynd? Ye, truely, madame, wythoute any faynyng. Well, good frend Arthur, sayde Florence, than be of a good herte: for, by the fayth that I owe vnto you, ye be in the waye to haue that ye desyre; for yf ye be of a good and faythfull herte to me warde, I promyse you to be in lyke case wyth you, what soo euer fall therof: therefore be ye hardy and couragious, and shewe your selfe so to morow in this tourney, that euery man may haue cause to doubt you. Madame, sayd Arthur, that Lorde that fourmed all the world, send youre haboundant grace bothe bounte and valure: for now that I haue your loue, I am ryche ynough, for I desyre no more of God, and I shall be true to you whyle my life endureth. Wel, myne owne true louer! sayde Florence, I shal tell you what ye shal do: I wil that ye shall be too morowe in the tourney in the company of the Kynge of Orqueney, who is my cosyn germayne; and I wil that fro hens forth he be your

companion, and that ye loue hym ; and I shall desyre hym euer to encrease your honour in as moche as he may : and I shall sende vnto you to gyue you attendaunce my senesshal, and other of my knightes, and they shall be of your route : and there I desyre you do suche dedes of armes, that it may sounde to your honour, and to the rest & peas of my herte : for my herte shall be repasted and nourysshed with the good renowne of your hye prowesse. I maye not lōge talke with you at this time, nor so often as my herte wold ; but alwayes sende me your wyll & mynde by mayster Steuen, and I shall sende myne agayne vnto you : kepe secrete this mater how so euer ye do, for elles moche harme or euyl myght perauenture happen to fall to vs by false enuy : be ye alwaye true & faythfull, and I shall doo my payne to brynge you to honoure.

And as they were thus talkynge togyder, there yssued out of the forest Proserpyne, quene of the fayry, & of the Castell of Hurtebyse, where as Arthur had ben with the Wounded Knight. And she dyde syt downe by Arthur ; and bothe the louers knewe nothyng therof tyll she was set : and as soone as Arthur sawe her, he knewe her ryght well, and dyde salute her, and she hym agayne, and Florēce also. And she said to Arthur : Frende ! now haue ye that your hert hath lōge desyred for ; therefore now be in peas and ioie, and loue your louer with true and faythfull herte. Fayre doughter Florence ! I sawe not you syth I was in your bedde, & there I made knowledge to you of this man : beholde here Arthur youre true louer, who faythfully & wyth good herte loueth you : therefore, fayre doughter, loue hym agayne ; for I dyde desteny hym to you in your natiuyte, in the Moūt of Aduentures, and at the same tyme I destenyed also that ye shold in all thinge resemble vnto me. Than Arthur behelde them bothe one after another, and so perceyued well that they were lyke in all thynges ; for there was noo creature, though he were neuer soo crafty, that yf he behelde wel at lēgth them both, coude not dyscryue the one fro the other, they resembled so nere togyder. Thā she sayd to Florence : Beholde here your louer, and I wyll bere wytnesse y^t he is at this time the moost true louer that lyueth ; for I haue ryghte well proued hym. And than she recounted to

Florence how that she had desyred his loue in the forest, and also caused hym to come vnto the castell of Hurtebyse, and there dyd as moche as she coude to entyse his mynde to cause hym to loue her; and also how she made other to tempte hym; and how all that wolde not auayle, for alwayes he was in one ferme poynt: wherat Florence right swetely dyde smyle. Than Proserpyne sayd to Arthur: Frende, ye shall haue her in mariage, but first ye must suffre grete paine. And, fayre Florence, bycause that the emperoure and the kynge your fader be grete togyder, therefore your fader wyll be right sore dyspleased with you; in suche wyse, that, yf he myghte haue you at that tyme, he woulde put you bothe to death: but for al that be not abashed, for I shal make the peas bytwene you ryght well. There is no greate loue bitwene him and themperour; but I promyse you, or all be done, I shall cause as grete hate to be bytwene them, in so moche that eche of the shal defie other to the deth: wherfore liue ye in rest and peas, and loue eche other faythfully, and I shal thinke ryght well on euery thyng that shall be behouable for you in this mater: and so thus I bequethe you bothe to God for thys tyme. So than the Quene Proserpyne rose, and wente her waye so sodeinly, that none of them wist where that she was become; wherof they had gret maruayle.

Than Florence made a token to mayster Steuen that he shoulde come to theym; and whan he was come, she said: Mayster, beholde Arthur, here I delyuer hym to you, and loke that ye take good hede to hym: and shewe to my cosyn, the Kynge of Orquene, that I send hym to hym, and say that I desyre hym to thynke to do hym as muche honoure to morow as he can do, for my sake. And, good swete louer, Arthur, think ye to morow how that ye are a louer to a fayre gentyl damoyzell, & to a ryght noble lady & a ryche; giue ye gyftes largely to these noble knightes, both harneys and horse, the which shal make you to be beloued of euery body; for I bileue the tyme wyl come that we shal haue nede of frendes: there is noo sweter thyng than largely to gyue; for therby, oftentimes, all yll wyl is appeased. And, mayster, I charge you to delyuer to hym what so euer he wyl haue. Arthur, now go on

your way, and lodge in the tente y^e the king, my father, hath ordeyned for you : and loke ye be fre & large, and giue wyth good herte : and so, as for this time, adew myne owne dere loue ! And so, for a remēbraunce, kyssed hym. And than she departed, and wente to the Quene of Orqueneý. And Arthur and the mayster went to the senesshals tente, and there they encountred Gouvernar and Bawdewyn. Than, wythin a whyle, Arthur toke leue of the senesshal and of al other that were there, and so departed, and went to the kynges tent. And by the way he mette the Kyng of Orqueneý, who issued out of the Kyng of Valefoūdes tente, who was father vnto mayster Steuen : & whan he sawe Arthur and mayster Steuen together, he dyd salute them, & made to them ryghte greate chere and ioie. And so they wente talkynge togyther tyll they came to his tent. Than the mayster toke hym aparte, and sayde : Syr, my lady Florence trusteth mucche in you, and loueth you ryght entyerly : wherefore, syr, she hath sente you here Arthur, her owne knyght, & putteth him into youre handes ; and she desyreth you, that all the honoure and ayd that ye can do, that ye wyl shew it to him to morowe in the tourneye, for her sake. And whan the kyng herde that, he had ryghte great ioie, and sayd to Arthur : Syr, by the fayth that I owe vnto the kyng, I promyse you that I wyl bere to hym faythful company and true loue, for the loue of my lady and of you. So thus they were so longe togyther, till it was tyme to go to theyr restes ; and so than euery man retourned into theyr owne tentes and lodgynge. And the mayster delyuered to Gouvernar xl. horses for Arthur, to then- tent that he should gyue them away the nexte day.

CAP. LXXIX.

HOW THAT ARTHUR HAD THE HONOUR OF THE TOURNEY THE FYRST DAYE, THE WHYCHE WAS MADE FOR THE FAYRE FLORENCE, BETWENE THE KYNGE EMENDUS AND THE EMPEROUR, WHO WOLDE HAUE HAD FLORENCE TO HYS WYFE; ON THE WHYCHE DAY ARTHUR GATE HYM SELFE GREAT PRAYSE AMONG ALL THE BARONY; IN SO MUCHE, THAT EUERY KNYGHT WAS GLAD TO BE IN HIS COMPANY: WHEREOF THE FAYRE FLORENCE WAS RIGHT IOYOUS, FOR SHE LOUED HYM ABOUE ALL OTHER.

IN the next mornyng all the kinges and other rose & herde masse, &, suche as wold, toke a sop in wine: & than eueri mā armed him. Thā Gouvernar and Bawdewyn, by the cōmaūdement of Arthur, dyd gyue and departe many horses and moche harneys to sondry knyghtes where as they sawe mister and nede; the whyche knyghtes thanked Arthur ryghte hertely, and promysed to gyue hym theyr helpe and socoure at all tymes, and ayenst euery man; wherby it appereth, that there is nothyng but by large gyftes it is made softe and meke. Than the tydynges of Arthurs courtesye was spredde abroad in euery tente; and there it was said, how that ther was not in all the world soo free a knyght as Arthur was. And these wordes came to the audyence of the fayre Florence, wher at her hert dyde laughe. And therewithall she mounted on a palfrey, and the Quene of Orqueney and the archebyssshop in her company, who shewed her how that Arthur had a grete renowne, and counseiled her to loue hym well.

And thus was Kyng Emendus mounted on his horse, & al his barony, to behold the tournay: and Arthur was redy armed in y^e place wher as the tournay should be. And so than there came to hym the Kyng of Orqueney, with his baner dysplayed, & moo than ii.C. in his company. And whan he came to Arthur, he sayd in open audyence: Syr, youre noble valure & hye prowesse is right wel knowen; & I bileue veryly, that in al this tournay there

shall be no knyght lyke vnto you : therfore, syr, I offre to you my body & all my company to be this daye vnder your gouernaūce. And whan Florēce herde that, she smyled for ioye. And than there came to hym all suche knyghtes as he had gyuen to before bothe horse and harneys ; and they all thanked hym ryght swetely, and sayde : Syr, we wyll be of your route this daye, for we make of you our capytayne in this tournay. And as thei loked downe into y^e valey, thei saw where there came Florēce senesshall, with hys baner dysplayed, & with hym syr Brysebar, syr Ansell, & syr Myles of Valefoude, and with thē iii.C. knyghtes, who were all pertayning to the fayre Florence : and they all came to Arthur, & toke hym for their chiefe capytayne.

And whā Arthur sawe the grete honour that was done to hym, he had so grete ioye, that his hardines encreaced therby more than the one halfe ; & so dashte to his horse, & rode forth, and dyde salute the Kynge Emēdus, who helde his one hande in the lappe of hys doughter Florence. Than the kynge dyde salute hym agayne, & sayd : Syr, I requyre you helpe to ayde this day our knyghtes, yf ye may. Ye, good Arthur, said Florence, and shewe so forth your selfe, that it mai be knowen how ye be a knyghte pertainynge to a gentyll damoyzell. Madame, doubte ye not but I wyl do my deuoyre, for my wyll therto is good. Thā Arthur retourned, and went agayne to the Kinge of Orquency ; and he was so fayre and goodly to beholde in harneys, that euery man had theyr eyen vpon him, and sayd : This knyght is the soueraine of bounte and beaute of all the chyualry of all the worlde. Than there came to the felde the Erle of the Yle Perdue, & with him a thousande and v.c. knyghtes, all with baners and streamers dysplaied, wauering in the wynde, with grete noyse of trompettes, tabours, and busynes. And than there was mounted on theyr horses, to beholde the tournay, the emperour, & Kynge Jonas, & the Duke of Bigor, who as than was late come out of his owne couētre. Than harodes began to crye : Knyghtes, do your best ! go togyder, bayle ! bayle ! Than began the tournay, & knyghtes wēt togider by gret routes, and laide on eche vpon other. And Arthur rusht forth w^t hys horse so rudely as thoughe the erth had

trembled, and strake so the fyrst that he encountred w^t all in the myddes of the breste soo rudely, that he ouerthrewe knyght and horse al togider on a hepe. Thā Florence said to the kyng, her fader : Syr, of yonder knyght that is fallen, I hope we shal haue peace of him al this day. Certenly, fayre doughter, sayde the kynge, that is true; for that stroke came from the handes of a good knyghte. Than Arthur encountred an other, & toke him by the sholders, & drewe hym so rudely to him warde, that he cast hym downe in the myddes of the place. Than he toke his sword, the whyche Florence had sent him, for he wold not draw out Clarence, his good sword, to thentent y^t he would not mayme or sle no knyght by his wyl that daye : but he gaue wyth that sword suche strokes, y^t he brought aslepe who so euer he touched, so that thei were fayn to tomble to the erth whether they woulde or not. And there he dyd soo muche at that bront, that he bette downe a xv. knyghtes. Than euery man y^t saw hym sayd : Thys knyght is none earthlye man, but we thynke rather he be a fende of hell; whoo thynketh he be nothyng pertaynyng to God, for he confoundeth all that euer he attayneth vnto. So euery mā was abashed of hys hye prowes & vertue.

Than the Kyng of Orqueney alwayes folowed Arthur with hys eyen; & by the reason of the noble prowesse that he sawe in hym, he toke in him greter hardynes than euer he dyd before; and therewith he rusht into a gret flocke of knyghtes that were of the emperours partye, and layde on rounde aboute hym; for he was a ryght noble knyght. Than al those knyghtes and dyuers other ran rounde aboute hym; for they knew well, yf they myght take hym prysoner, it shoulde be a great honour vnto them, and alsoo they thought they should haue a great raunsome for hym : but alwayes he defended hym selfe ryght nobly; but at length it auayled him not, for the prese was so gret; and some toke hym by the necke, and some by the sholders, and so would haue vnhorsed hym. And whan syr Neuelon, the senesshal, syr Brysebar, syr Ansell, & syr Myles, sawe the Kinge of Orqueney in that case, they dasht al togyther intoo the prese to helpe hym; and there they did right nobly : how be it, the senesshal was beten downe, for hys horse

foundred vnder hym, and soo there they would haue taken hym prisoner. Than Gouvernar sawe that, and he dressed hym to that part where as the senesshal was taken; and Gouvernar helde in bothe hys handes a gret leuer, wherwith he layd on amonge those knyghtes with so mighty and heuy strokes, that he astonyed whome soo euer he touched. And there he dyd so moche, that by very force he caused the senesshal to remount agayne on his horse. And in the meane season the Kyng of Orqueneý was holden ryght short, so that hys horse foundred and fell vnder hym: how be it, after y^t he defended hym selfe righte valyauntly. And whan Arthur, who as than had dyscomfyted a great companye of knyghtes, saw the kyng in y^t dystresse, he rusht forth into the prese, and encountred with the son of the Erle of the Yle Perdue, and toke him with both his handes about hys sholders, and dydde caste hym downe on other two knyghtes that were on fote, so that one of theim fell flatte to the erth: and than he rose agayne and behelde the knyght that was fallen on him, and sayd: Marye! syr, yll haue he that dyd caste you vpon me. And whan Arthur had ouerthrowē this knight, he toke his horse by the rayne & brought hym to the kynge, and dide light of his owne horse to helpe the kinge to mounte thereon, in the spyte of all hys enemies: & than, by grete force and hardynes, dyde lepe vp agayne on his owne horse.

And al this saw wel Florence, and the archebyssshop, & all the other kynges, & praised gretely that dede. He is the best knyght of the world, sayd the Kyng Emēdus. Syr, that is true, sayd the byssshop.

And whan Arthur had remounted the Kynge of Orqueneý agayne, he said: Syr, put your selfe no more this daye into soo greate a prese of your enemyes: but, syr, & it please you, hardilye folowe me. Than Arthur put hym selfe in to the same prese that was before on the kinge, and thei were as than al rested on Gouvernar and on syr Brysebar, who as than had grete nede of helpe. And there Arthur layde on rounde about him by suche force, y^t he bette downe knyghtes & horses to the plaine earth: for he strake none but that he went to the earth. And soo there Arthur dyde

so moche, that he ouercame all that route : & whan he was passed theym, he sawe where thre knyghtes had beten downe syr Myles of Valefounde. Than Arthur dressed hym so to the fyrst, that he ouerthrewe him to the erth, & toke his horse, & delyuered it to syr Myles, & caused hym to mount theron. Than Arthur strake so the seconde knyghte, that hys horse bare hym all aboute in a traunce, for he wyst not where he was. And Gouvernar, with his leuer, strake so the thyrde, that he fell flatte to the erth ; and whan he releued, he fledde awaye as fast as he myghte, for he durst no lenger abyde for all the cyte of Parys. And the other knyght y^e was borne on his horse all in a traunce, came before where as the Kyng Emendus and Florence was, wherat the kyng & she dyd laugh. And whan the knyght reuyued, he sayd, all on hye : The knight is an yll carpenter, for he maketh many chyppes : I trowe all the fendes of hell hath sent hym hyder : shame haue he, I wene he is a Burgonyon.

Than the kinge laughed at tho wordes, & sayde : There is none can abyde hym, for his strokes are ryght valyaunte. That is true, syr, sayd the bysshop.

Than Arthur sawe where there was a grete cōpany of knyghtes, wel to y^e nombre of ii. hondred in a route ; & amonge them was the Erle of the Yle Perdue, & he had taken more than xl. of Florence knyghtes, and vnhorsed them, and was ledinge of them forthe as prysoners. And whan Arthur sawe that, he was ryght sorowfull : and soo by grete randon he dasht in amonge them, and there dyde suche dedes of armes, that all that behelde hym wondred at hys valyauntnes ; for it semed that he was but newly come to the tournay : he claue asonder sheldes, and vnbarred helmes, and braste asonder gyrthes, & bette downe knyghtes togyder on hepes. And Gouvernar, w^t his leuer, delte strokes right rudely, wherwith he broughte knyghtes a slepe, soo that some of them wyste not whiche waye to tourne them. Thā came to him the Kinge of Orquene, Brysebar, the senesshall, syr Myles, and syr Ansell, and many other knyghtes. And so by that tyme there was horsed agayne a xxv. of the knyghtes that were before taken prysoners ; & there they delte so w^t theyr enemyes, that the Erle

of the Yle Perdue was sore dyspleased; & he, & a xviii. in hys company, ranne all at ones at Arthur, & there, by forse, they slewe his horse vnder hym, wherwith he was ryghte sore dyspleased; and than stepte vp on his fete, and gaue soo many greate strokes & heuy, that he cast euery mā to the erth, who so euer he met withal. And than he repented hym that he had not born with him that day Clarence, his good sworde: how be it, he gaue suche strokes, y^t none durst aproche to him, but euerye man fled fro hym. And whan Gouvernar saw Arthur a fote in that greate prese, he aduysed well the Erle of the Yle Perdues neuew, who was right well mounted on a good horse; & so toke him with his one hand by the necke, and pulled him down on his horse mane, and gaue hym a ryght great stroke wyth his leuer betwene his sholders: &, as he thus helde him, Arthur came & toke hym by the leg, and tūbled him ouer his horse out of the sadel, and threw him to y^e earth; and so toke his hors, and did mount theron. And whan the erle saw his neuew on the erth, he spurred his horse to come to his rescowe. And than Arthur enbraced him so at his comyng, and spurred so his horse, that he drewe hym clene besyde hys sadell; and, in the spite of al his enemyes, he toke hym prysoner, and caused him to be yelded to King Emendus; and so was put into the keypyng of the fayre Florence. And thā she caused hym to be vnarmed, for he was ryght wery, and was verye hote, and sore chafed. And than Arthur dasht intoo the prese, and there dyd what he lyst hym selfe; for he bet downe knyghtes, and wan horses.

And themperour sawe well howe that he al onely discomfyted hys knyghtes, the whych greued him right sore; & also the Duke of Bygor was ryght sore dysplesed in hys mynde, because he sawe Arthur do all that day so nobly. And at the laste he knewe well how that was he that had slayne hys neuewe at the citey of Argence, wherfore he would fayne haue runned on hym to haue slayne hym, but he doubted muche the Kynge of Orqueney. Than he sayd to themperour: Syr, the Erle of the Yle Perdue is taken prysoner, and all your knyghtes clene dyscomfyted; the whych is to you great shame, wythoute so be that ye put therto

some other maner of remedy ; and all the shame that is done to vs, is done by yonder knyght with the white shelde, and by the other knight with the gret leuer. And verely it is he that slewe my neuewe, syr Isembart, at Argence, and sore wounded my cosyn, syr Rowland, & also he hath slayne syr Fyrmont, my tresourer, and so he hath done me righte greate damage ; and I knowe well he is a ryghte fayre knight and a yonge, and of his hādes suche as ye may se : and this I say bicause of your loue, Florence, whome ye shal haue : but his prowes and goodnes parauenture may cause her to loue hym, for the heart of a woman is sone turned and chaūged : this knight hath done you al redy right great damage, and is likely to do you more, w^{out} ye take right good hede, and put therto right good counsayl : therfore, syr, I requyre you let me haue the tourney to morowe, and I shall soo handel hym, that I promyse you he shall not be here agayne on the thyrde daye. Well, syr, sayd themperour, I graunt you your desire. Syr, sayd the duke, I thanke you. And so they left their talking as at y^e time.

And Arthur, al that season, layde on round about him as freshely as though he had but newly begon the tourney. And the Kyng of Orqueneý behelde hym meruaylously, and spake neuer a worde. And whan he had longe beholden hym, he toke at hys hye prowesse suche hardynes, that he habandoned hym selfe intoo the prese, and layde on frely with hys sworde. Than the tourney was more greter and more thycker than it was of al the day before. And so there Gouvernar brake his leuer ; thā he layd hand on his sword, and dyd therwyth as much as any good knyght oughte or myght doo. And so at last Arthur and the Kyng of Orqueneý dyd so muche, that they vnhorsed all the erles cōpany ; and wer set on fote sore beaten, in so much that they had much payne to stand on their fete. Than Arthur stode in the felde wth his sword in his hand, saying : Lordes, yf there be any moo that wil come, let them prese forth, I am redy to answeare them. And so at last y^e Kyng of Orqueneý and he retourned fro the felde. Than the Kynge Emendus encountred them, & embraced them all armed as they were, & specially Arthur, and thanked hī muche of the pain that

he had suffred y^t daye; for, syr, all onely by your prowesse thys day, themperours people are dyscōfyted.

And as they wer thus talking together, ther came to them a knight fro y^e Duke of Bygor, who sayd to y^e Kyng Emēdus: Syr, the Duke of Bygor demaūdeth of you the tourney to morow. Than stepte forth the Kyng of Mormall, and sayde: Sir, may it plesse you to suffre me to haue to morow the turney agenst the Duke of Bygor? Syr, it pleaseth me ryghte wel, sayde the Kyng Emendus; therefore I desyre you do your part, for we haue the honor this day, therfore do your paine that we may haue it also to morow. Syr, said he, doubte not I shall do my true deuoyre. Thā he toke Arthur by the hand, and said: Gentyll knyght, floure of all chyualry! I desyre you as hertely as I can, do so moche to morow as ye may wyne a kyng for euermore, as y^t it would please you to shew parte of your hye prowesse to morowe in ayding of my quarell, and in the defence of the noble honour of my lord y^e kyng, here present. Ye, syr, sayd the Kyng Emendus, & therto I wyl desyre you; for by your hye prowesse we haue the honor this day, therfore it shuld greue vs gretely and we should lese it to morow. Thā Arthur sayd: Syr, with a right good wil I shall do my deuoyre. And whan Florence herd y^t, she was not content in her mynde; for she thought that Arthur had bene sore wery of that dayes tourney, & thought that it should gretly anoy hym yf he turnayed the nexte daye: and so she thought she wold let that tourney yf she myght. Thā she cōmaunded the kyng, her father, to God as at that time. Than she toke with her into her tent the archebyshop and dyuers others of her barons; & King Emendus caused Arthur to be broughte into his tent with al hys hole baronye. And all the emperours knyghtes spake of nothyng but of Arthurs prowesse; for they sayd, that there was not agayne, in al the world, soo good a knight as he was, beholdyng and considering al his dedes, & how that he had borne him selfe in thys turney: & the emperour said, y^t he would rather resemble to hym than to haue suche an other empyre as his owne was: & the bruyte of Arthurs renowne sprad so far abrodē, tyll at last it came to the hearyng of syr Rowland. And than he said: I thanke

God that suche a knight hath justed agenst me, for my honor is the more.

Thā the Kyng Emendus came into his owne tente, & than caused Arthur to come to hym : & there were al the other kinges, who dyd muche honour to Arthur. And there were dyuers that sayd to the King of Soroloys : Syr, behold here this knight, full of bounte & worthy to haue gret honour. And all that they sayd by Arthur, who as than was right hote. Than the king cōmaunded two squyers to stand with a towell & blow wynd into hys face. And thus Arthur stode before the kynge, and he was goodly for to beholde, for he was streyght, longe, & bygge, & aboue all other ryght gracyous of his wordes ; for euery man had grete disporte at his lowly and goodly wordes. Than the king cōmaunded y^e there should be brought to Arthur a mantell to caste on hym, to thentent he should take no could ; and the Kyng of Orqueney dyde put it about him, y^e whyche became hym ryghte well. And than there came to them Gouvernar, to whome there was made ryght grete feest & ioie. There came thyder the Erle of y^e Yle Perdue, whō Arthur had taken prisoner in the tournay, and in his company xxx. knyghtes, to pledge hym of his raunsome. And the kynge made hym ryght good chere. And syr Roulande & themperours seneschall, who had justed before wyth Arthur, by that tyme were heled of theyr hurtes, & were come also in to the kynges tente, to sporte them and to here tydynges of the tournay. And whā the Erle of the Yle Perdue sawe them, he had great ioie, and demaunded of theym howe they dyde ? And they answered, & sayd, how that they had ben sore hurte, but as than they wer well amended. Than the erle sayd to the kyng : Syr, it is of trouth that I was taken in your tournay ; therefore, syr, I am come to you to be deliuered of my raunsome ; therefore may it please you to shewe me your pleasure, and I am redy to accomlishe your commaūdemēt. Certaynly, syr, sayd the kyng, it lyeth not in me, for that mater lyeth in the pleasure of Arthur, who is here presente, who that toke you prysoner in y^e felde. Syr, said Arthur, sauing your grace, that is not so ; for the tornay is yours, and I am but as one of youre knyghtes, and of my ladyes, your doughter : ther-

fore, syr, it were no reason that I should saye or doo any thyng where as your grace is present. In y^e name of God, sayd the kynge, we wil that ye shal speke your mynde, and it shall please vs ryght well all y^t euer ye shall saye or do. Than the Kynge of Valefoūde sayd: Syr, ye shall do thus, for it is reason that ye do as my lorde, the kynge, wyl haue you. Well, syr, sayd Arthur, in y^e name of God. And so stode vpon his fete, & sayd to the kinge: Syr, & it like your grace, syth it is your pleasure y^t I shall speke, I say that this erle, here beyng present, shall kepe you cōpany thys dyner season, & after dyner to sporte and to play him with you as longe as it shal please him: and whan it wyl please him to retourne to the emperour, that he & all his company go franke & free; & I wyl desyre him to take of my gift this swerd, the which I thinke be good and sure; y^e whiche Gouvernar had brought to hym before fro mayster Steuen by the commaundemēt of Florence, to thentēt that he should gyue it to the earle: and indede there was not a better swerde in all the emperours hoost. And there Arthur desyred y^e earle, for hys loue, to take it for a remembraūce: and also desyred him to take a horse of his gyfte, in recompence of the horse y^t he had taken fro him in the felde. And whan the kinge herde Arthur haue these wordes, he had grete ioye, & loued hym with al his herte, bycause of his gentilnes. Than therle answered, & sayd: Syr gentyll knyghte of herte, I haue rychesse sufficient, and am able to be set a ryght grete raunsome, tho it wer xx. or xxx. duckettes; and also I haue swerdes and horses ynough: how be it, y^e hye prowesse that is in you, and the grete gentylnes of youre herte, prouoketh me to receyue all your courtesye: & veryly I take all your offre of you, on the condicion that ye wil fro hens forth take mi ayde and socours in al your busynes agenst al persons except my lorde the emperoure. Than Arthur, all smylyng, thanked hym muche. Than the kyng enbraced the erle for the loue of Arthur. Thā was water brought forth, and the kyng wasshed, and the erle, and so dyned together, & made good chere, and were righte richely serued: and after dyner they sported them together, tyll it was time for the kinge to go to his rest. Than the erle toke leue of the

kyng, & so cōmaunded him to God. And Arthur conuayed him a great space, and did giue to the erles knightes manye good horses & palfraies, wherof thei thanked him right gretely. And at the last Arthur toke hys leue of hym, & so departed.

And than the erle went streyght to y^e emperours tente, where as he founde hym accompanied wyth the Duke of Bygor, and many other noble knightes. And there the erle made greate praysyng of Arthurs before themperoure, and shewed howe of his gentylnes he had suffered him to go quyte, and how that he had giuen him many grette giftes, and also to his knyghtes. Verely, sayd the emperoure, there is not suche a knight in al y^e world, neyther of beautye nor of prowesse; for he is the souerayne knight of al other, for I se none like him of prowesse: I wolde I had giuen y^e best citie that I haue, on the condiciō that he were retained as my knyght. And whan y^e Duke of Bygor herd themperours prayse so muche Arthurs, he was in hys mynde ryght sore displeased, & sayd to therle: Syr, ye make here a great pletyng of a flying vacabonde, for no man knoweth what he is, nor fro whens he cōmeth; & ye make of hym here suche a noyse, that no mā taketh hede of anye thyng elles. I can not tell you what he hath giuen you: certainly it is no honor for you to take any gyftes of a man fugytyue, that is fledde or banysshed out of his own coutry: but, syr, I wyl ye know certaynely, y^e what so euer giftes he hath giuen you, to morow shal I giue you his head frō his sholders: therefore I hold him wise in that he hath departed of his tresour in his life dayes to you & to your company, for I warant him he shal do so neuer agayne. Wel, syr, sayd therle, threte him hardely, fayre, and easely, that he knew it not; for and he do, I fere me lest that he wyl flye away, and than ye can not giue me his heade: &, syr, where as ye saye that no man knoweth what he is; syr, I ensure you he is a ryght noble wise knight; and it maketh no mater to a noble knight where so euer he be cōmeth, for hys bounte wyl shewe right well his estate: & where as ye say that he is a vacabonde, and is fledde out of hys own coutry; syr, it had ben better to youre newew that he had fledde into England or that he met with him at Argence, for there your newewe lost his lyfe, and

there ye fledde away w^tout byddynge of anye farewel. He nedeth not to haue anye care though ye say thus of him, for an yl tongue enpayreth neuer the honour of a noble wyse man: and I ensure you I wyll shewe him these vylayne wordes that ye say of hym; and yf anye yll come to you therby, take it a worth. Than y^e duke began to waxe angry; & so the mater wold haue ben worse and themperour had not bene, for he caused them to be departed & to be in peas.

Now let vs leue to speake of them, and returne to Florence.

CAP. LXXX.

HOW THAT FLORENCE FAYNED HER SELF TO BE SICKE, TO THE ENTENT THAT ARTHUR SHOULD NOT TOURNEY THE NEXTE DAYE; FOR SHE WAS IN FERE THAT ARTHUR HAD BENE WEARY BYCAUSE OF THE TRAUAYLE THAT HE HAD ENDURED THE FYRST DAYE OF THE TOURNAY. AND HOWE THAT THE EMPEROUR, WHAN HE KNEW THAT, HE WENT TO SE HER, AND SO DYDE HER FADER, KYNGE EMENDUS, AND ALL OTHER KYNGES, DUKES, ERLES, AND BARONS, AND ALL THE HOLE CHYUALRY.

WHAN that Florēce was departed fro the king her fader and entred into her tent, than she drewe her into her secrete chābre, and called to her mayster Steuen, & sayd: Fayre swete mayster, I am ryghte sore displeased in my herte, bycause y^e the kyng my fader hath desired my loue Arthur to turnay again to morowe in the company of the King of Mormall: for I see wel he doth not consider the trauaile that he hath endured this daye; for yf he were made of stele, he cā not endure thus euery daye to trauayle. Alas! yf ony yll or dyshonour shold come to him, I shold die for sorowe. I se well they y^e thus desyre hym to go forth agayne to morowe,

loue but lytle his helth; wherfore I wil fynde some meanes to put of the tournay as to morowe, to thentente that he shal be the more freshe the nexte daye after; therefore I wyll sende worde to the kyng my fader how that I am sycke in my bed, desyryng him that as to morow the tournay maye be deferred tyll the nexte daye: but, mayster, I desyre you lette Arthur haue knowlege of the trouth, for elles I fere me he would be sorowfull for my disease. Madame, said the maister, ye speke wysely, and I shall tell you why. Fyrst, therby Arthur shall well rest hym: and, secondly, it is so, he is as now gretly praised of his courtesy, & is taken as chefe companion with the king your fader, and wyth all the other kynges and barons: &, as I vnderstande, he is gretely in the grace of the emperour, and of all his knightes; for all this hole assemble loueth him. And as soone as themperour hereth of your dysease he wyl come and se you, accompanied with all the nobles of his company: and whan the kyng your fader hereth of his cōmīg to you, I doubte not but that he, and all his other iiii. kynges, wyth all the noble men of theyr company, wyl in lykewyse come to se you: so than therby here shall be assembled all the hole chyualrye. And so than, at some houre conuenient, while they be al here, it shall be well done to assaye the vertue of the chaplet, & to se to whome the ymage wyll gyue it to. Alas! mayster, I loue this knyght, & I woulde not for any thinge that an other shoulde haue it; & I fere me leest the ymage wyll gyue it to some other persone. Than the mayster, all smiling, sayd: Madame, what perauenture and the ymage gyue me the chaplet, wold ye be content? And as he spake he smelled to a fayre rose that he helde in his hāde. Mayster, quod Florence, ye please me right well, & I loue you faythfully, & also I do Arthur. Madame, sayd y^e mayster, than syth I please you, & that ye loue me & Arthur also, than it maketh no mater wheder that I or he haue the chaplet, sith that your loue is on vs both. Ye, but mayster, sayd Florence, in my loue there is a dyfference. And what is y^e difference? I pray you, madame, shew me the trouth. Truly, mayster, that rose that ye holde in your hande right well dooth sygnyfy it. This rose! madame, said the mayster, & I pray you howe? Herken,

mayster, to me, & I shal shew you : it is so, I se in that rose thre maner of thinges ; fyrst, the closoure without, the whyche kepeth fro hurting the budde tyll it be a full rose spradde abroad ; and whan it is spradde, than the leues be fayre & rede ; and in the myddes of the rose there are litle graines resembling to golde ; and out of this rose there maye be felte suche odour and smell, that it perseth throughout the nose euē to the hert, for the herte wyll reioyse with the good smell therof. In the name of God, said the mayster, all this that ye saye is true : but, madame, what dooth all this sygnifye ? Mayster, said Florence, I shal shew you. The closure without, the which kepeth y^e budde fro hurting til it be sprede abroad, sygnifyeth you, who hathe kepte me tyll this daye without enpayryng, for it is now tyme that the rose sprede abroad ; that is to say, to mary me, and to kepe my londe as it pertaineth to the doughter of a kynge : and these leues of the rose that be so fayre & rede, signifieth your trouth and faythfulnes ; for I haue founde euer in you grete trouth & boūte towarde me, and also to my fader, & to al the hole realme : &, mayster, in this rose there be graines lyke vnto gold, the which is the precyoust metal of al the world, and that is sygnified by the grete & excellent clergy that is in you, the whiche is more precious than gold ; for therby ye haue alwayes kept & defended me in all my nedes : &, mayster, by these iii. poyntes I loue you. But the fourth thing that is in this rose is the swete sauour therof, the which perseth al the hole body, euen to the hert ; for in the flagraūt odour therof, bothe the body & the herte is reioysed : and certaynly, maister, this iiii. loue that commeth thus of this rose is min own loue Arthur, who is chefe rose, and aboue all other mooste fayre, & aboue all other knyghtes moost valyaunt, as the rose is chefe of all floures. Madame, sayd the mayster, I se well ye haue had a good and a sage mayster ; & I se well how that ye loue me well without, but ye loue Arthur inwardly : and, by my soule, ye can not do better, for ye can haue none better than he is : & knowe ye for certayne, that none shal haue you but all onely he. Gentyl maister, said Florēce, helpe me therto, for al my trust is in you. Madame, as I vnderstande, he is come into the seneshalles tent. Well,

mayster, than go your way to him, and shewe him that I wyl that he come and se me, and brynge with hym the senesshal, and such other company as he wyl, & than shal I se by theyr countenaunce yf they be content, though I make Arthur a lytel good and lowly semblaūt; for oftentymes the wyll of the herte sheweth it selfe fayrely outwarde, for it is harde to know an other mannes wyl, without ther be made to hym some maner of semblaūt wherby he shall haue occasyon to vtter somewhat of hys wyl. Madame, said the mayster, I se well it is a subtil thing of a womans wytte, whan thei list them selfe. Than the maister rose & went into the seneschalles tent. At whiche tyme Brisebar said: Here lacketh none now in this cōpany but the mayster. And with that worde he entred in at the dore. And than syr Myles sayd: Loo! syrs, whan one speketh of the wolfe lightly, he seeth his taile: & so therw^t thei welcomed the mayster, & caused hym to syt downe by Arthur.

Than the maister sayd to Arthur: Syr, how haue ye done in this tournay? how semeth you by the knyghtes of this coūtre? be they not as valiaunt as the knyghtes of Fraūce? Certainly, mayster, sayd Arthur, they be as valyaunt, & rather more hardy; for there is none y^t I haue seen, but y^t they ought ryght well to be receyued in to the hye ordre of chyualry. Syr, sayde the mayster, ye may not departe fro hens now, tyl ye se my lady Florence; for & ye do, she wyl not be cōtent. Mayster, said Arthur, in the name of God I would be ryght glad to se her, but I knowe not her pleasure in y^t behalfe: let vs goo & se her all togyder: & so they rose and went all togyder with Arthur: and the mayster wente in before thē to Floreūce, & sayde: Madame, beholde here is Arthur, who is come to se you. He is right welcome, sayd Florence; and so she rose ayenst hym: and the Quene of Orqueney toke Arthur by the hande, & set him downe by her, and she demaunded of hym howe that he dyde syth the tournay? And he answered her, how that he dyde ryght well. By the good Lorde, said Florence, in the tournay ye suffred moche payne & trauayle, and ryght well there ye dyde: wherfore your loue, yf ye haue ony, ought to loue you the better: & this she said al smyling, and layde her

hande vpon his heed. Madame, as God helpe me, sayd Arthur, I haue not as moche loue as I wold haue. In good fayth, said the Quene of Orqueney, yf she were right hye & noble, she shold be right well employed on you. Ye truly, said Brisebar, I wold he were beloued as wel as I would according to my wyll. And whan Florence herde y^t, she smyled, & sayde: Syr Brysebar, by the faith y^t ye owe vnto the hye ordre of chyualry, & to saynt George, what is your wyll in that case? Madame, sayd he, I wyl not shew that, for perauēture it should displease you. Nay, by my soule, sayd Florence, I wyl not be displeased, what so euer ye saye; therefore shewe me your mynde: also I cōmaunde you so to doo. Madame, syth it is your pleasure, I shal shew you: I wold y^t ye loued hym in suche wyse, that he wer your lord and husbonde: for a more sweter, courteyser, nor a better knyght can ye not haue agayne in al the world; for a more gentyll gracious cōpani could not be fōud again as should be of you twaine. Well, Brisebar, said Florence, & saye ye this w^t good herte? Ye truly, madame, by al the saintes of paradyse! Well, syr seneshall, said Florence, & what shold be your mynde? Madame, said he, I praye to God I neuer go out of this place, but I would it were soo, on the cōditiō that it cost me as moch as I am worth. Thā she demaūded the same of all other; & they al w^t one voyce said y^e same. Wel, syrs, sayd she, behold wel wheder ye haue wysshed your profyte in this or not; for ye al know wel, how that this emperour demaūdeth me of y^e kinge, my fader, & would haue me to his wife; & therefore, yf it wer so that an other toke me, he would haue grete despyte, & moue ayenst hym warre, wherby should ensue that al ye should be put to payne & trouble, & in peryll of your lyues: for ye be al my men, wherfore ye ought to defende me ayenst all myn enemyes. Madame, sayd Brisebar, by my soule I care not for that, agaist who so euer it be, and it be not ayenst my lorde, your fader; for yf Arthur myght be euer amōge vs, we nede not to care for al the world; nor any maner of payne y^t I shold suffre for his sake, shold neuer greue me. Well than, quod Florence, I se well y^t ye wold suffre payne & peryl of your body, on the condicion y^t I wold haue hym to my hus-

bonde; & than she demaūded so of all the other knightes, yf they wolde in lyke wyse? And they answered yes, all w^t one voyce. And how should I be sure of this? said Florēce. Madame, sayd they all, we faythfully assure you, by the fayth of our bodyes & lesynge of our londes and goodes. Than Florence said to Arthur: Syr, ye haue here many good frēdes. Madame, sayd he, I thanke them, and God rewarde them: & I shall deserue it to them whan I may. By my faith, quod the maister, I byleue you well, for ye haue a large & a plenteous hert: and so therewith Florēce brake their wordes of y^t mater, & fell in cōmunication of other maters til it was tyme to depart.

Than Arthur toke his leue of Florence, & of all other, & mayster Steuen conuaied him forth, & said to him in his ere: Syr, be not trobled in your minde thoughe as to morow y^t ye here y^t my lady Florence be somewhat diseased, for she wyll do it for suche causes as ye shal know ryght well here after. Well, quod Arthur, I am, & euer shall be, content w^t her noble pleasure. And so than y^e mayster toke his leue of Arthur, & retourned agayne to Florence; & Arthur went streyght to the King of Orqueneys tent: & than thei both went togyder to the King Emendus tēt, who as than was rysynge fro slepe; & so they thre sate downe togyder & talked of many thinges tyll it was time to goo to theyr souper, where as they were rychely serued: and after souper they sported them togyder tyll it was tyme to goo to their restes. Than the kynge departed, & all other, for that nyght.

CAP. LXXXI.

HOW THE TOURNAY THE NEXTE DAYE WAS DEFERRED, BICAUSE
OF FLORENCE DISEASE.

IN the nexte morning betymes the mayster rose, & lept on his horse, and so in grete haste rode streyght to y^e kinges tēt, & ther

he did alight, and soo was brought to the kinges beddes side. And whan the king sawe hym ther so erly, he demaūded what tidinges? Certainly, syr, sayde the maister, my ladye Florence hath bene this night right sore seke, & is as yet right sore holden w^t the collyke in her body: therfore, syr, she desyareth your grace, that y^e tournay this day may be deferred tyl to morow; by whiche tyme she trusteth to be wel amended, so y^t she wyl come and se the tournay, yf God wil sēde her ony ease of her paine. Saint Mary! sayd the kyng, gentyl maister! hath she than suche payne? I should be ryghte sory yf she should fortune to dye, as God forbid! without any issue of her body: for I wyl neuer haue wyfe, nor I haue no mo chyl dren but she; wherefore than the realme of Sorolois shold be w^tout heire of the right stocke, the which should be a great damage to al this realme. I thinke veryly she had to grete hete yesterday in y^e beholding of y^e tournay. Syr, said y^e maister, with Goddes leue she shal amende to morow: but in good faith, syr, it wer time that she were well maried. Well, mayster, said the king, I shal thinke therof ryght shortly. In the name of God, syr, quod y^e mayster, it is time y^t I returne to my ladi: but, syr, for Goddes sake deferre y^e tournay til the next day, bicause of Florence sekenes.

Than themperour sent a knyght of his to Florence, to know what malady she had: but Florence had cōmaunded, that if any body came fro themperour, y^t he sholde not be suffered to entre into her tente: so therby y^e knight could not be suffred to entre, and so returned againe to themperour, & shewed him how y^t no body coulde entre into her tent to speke w^t her. And than themperour said: Well, I wyl go se her myselfe. Than all the kynges, dukes, erles, & barons, y^t were in his cōpany, moūted on their horses, & rode forth w^t themperour. And whan the King Emēdus herd that themperour was ridynge to go se Florence, his doughter, than he mounted on his horse, & al his kings and knightes w^t him: & whan they were al met and assembled together, there was so mucche people, as though al the world had bene there. And at last a messenger came to maister Steuen, & said: Sir, themperour and the king, & al other noble men y^t be in thys felde, are coming

to se my lady Florence. Than y^e maister went and did shewe that to her.

Thā she comaunded that there sholde be made redy a riche bed before her paulyō, right before y^e face of the image w^t y^e chaplet : & the ymage was properly besene w^t a kyrtyl of purpel satyn, and a gowne of grene sarcenet ; & vpon the bed there was a riche quylt wrought with coten, couered with crimsen sendal styched w^t thredes of golde, and shetes of whyte sylke, and ouer al a ryche furre of ermynes : this bed was ryght ryche ; and Florence layd her downe in her bedde in a lyghte kyrtell of chaungeable vyolet tartorne, somewhat blusshynge on a red coloure, and she had a keuerchefe of whyte sylke on her head all loose vntyed ; wherfore there myght be sene vnder the keuerchefe her fayre throte, as whyte as yuery, and her fayre golden heyre flying about her neck, and her fayre face was in a meane, neyther to longe nor to rounde, fresshely coloured lyke the rose on the lylly : and on her there was cast a mātell of grene silk, and she did cast out her armes theron, so that her whyte handes and her long fyngers wer stretched abrode on the mantel. And the Quene of Orqueneysate by her, who sayd to the mayster : Syr, make youre selfe nowe as though ye were dyspleased, because that my lady is sycke. That is wel sayd, quod the mayster, and so shal I do : therwith he rusht togider his hat, & made semblaunt as though he had bene very angry ; wherat the quene & Florence did smyle right swetly. By y^e time, the emperour, and al the kynges & knightes, were come : than themperour went on the one side of the bed, & the king, her father, on the other side, & so sate them downe on the sides of the bed ; & all the other lordes and knightes stode round about y^e bed. Than there came also the King of Orqueneys, and Arthur with him, and they lente theym downe on the beddes fete. Than themperour did salute Florence, & she said how y^e he was welcome. Than the kinge, her father, demaunded of her howe she dyd ? & layd his hand on her heade. Thā she behelde her father, and sayd : Syr, I haue ben this night and al mornyng ryghte yll at ease ; but, thanked be God ! I do nowe better than I dyd. God be thanked ! said the kyng. Than the Kyng of Orqueneys, who was

right preuy of her counsaile, sayde: Madame, thynke not longe, for, w^t Gods leue, ye shall soone be hole. And than she beheld him, & smyled a lytel, and sayd: Syr, I wolde be glad therof: and so thus they talked togyther of one thing and other a grete space. And Florence sayde howe y^t theyr company dyd her muche good.

CAP. LXXXII.

HOWE THE YMAGE IN THE PAUYLYON DID SET HER CHAPLET ON ARTHURS HEAD IN Y^e PRESENCE OF THEMPEROUR, & OF X. OTHER KINGES, & OF ALL THE HOLE ASSEMBLY: WHERWYTH THE EMPEROUR WAS RIGHT SOROWFULL, BECAUSE HE THOUGHT TO HAUE HAD FLORENCE IN MARYAGE, BUT HE FAYLED OF HYS PURPOSE; FOR THE YMAGE TOKE NO REGARD NEYTHER TO THE EMPEROUR, NOR TO NONE OTHER THERE, BUT AL ONELY TO ARTHUR, TO WHOME FRELY SHE DID GIUE HER CHAPLET.

AND whan the mayster sawe his time, & knew how y^t all y^e hole barony were there assembled, he rose vpō his fete, and said in open audience: Mine own dere & redoubted lady Florence! our Lorde God hath done you this day greate grace & honour: for I beleue verely, y^t neuer before this time there were neuer so many noble men assembled togyther, as be now here present, for to se a ladye y^t is dyseased; for, madame, ye maye se here about your bed, an emperour, x. kinges, dukes & erles mo than l., & al y^e hole barony of thempyre of Ynde the More, & also of x. other kyngdomes: wherfore, madame, ye ought to be righte ioyous, & more at ease in your hert, for they al loue you, and are glad you to plesse: & also, as I vnderstād, my lord the kyng, your father, hath grete wyl, yf God be pleased, to puruey for you a ryght hye and a noble maryage: and I thinke y^t yf it plesse him now, in his mynd he maye be well satysfied, for I beleue he shal neuer se agayne, in one daye,

so many noble men assembled together as here be now presente : wherfore now he may fulfyl his pleasure ; and, according to my mynd, it were time that ye were married. Than Florence sate her vp in her bedde, & a lady cast a mantel about her necke, & said : Maister, it is of trouth how that the kyng, my father, here presente, hath had a great season good wyl to mary me, in so muche that he is now wel at the poynt thereof, if it be his pleasure : but it is so, y^t my lorde the kinge, my father, by seming taketh no hede to accomplyshe suche destenyas as were destenyed of me at my natiuytye ; & because that paraduenture all ye, my lordes, y^t be here present at this time, knoweth not what it is y^t was destenyed on me, therefore I shall shewe it here in open audyence. It is of trouth that my lady, my mother, whome God assoyle, whan I was borne she sent me by y^e Kinge of Orqueney, & mine vncl, tharchbysshop, and by the Quene of Orqueney, who are al here present, to the Moūt of Aduentures, and there it was destenyed on me by the quene of the fayry, that no creature sholde haue me to his wife but al onely he to whome the ymage in my pailyon sholde gyue the chaplet that she holdeth in her handes ; and if that any other sholde take me, he sholde dye an yll death : therefore and to this couenaunt did seale and swere, the king, my father, and all hys other kinges, and xii. peres of his relme ; and so on that poynt take me who so wil, yf he lyst to put hym selfe in the aduenture yf he haue not the chaplet : therefore let the kyng, my father, do as it pleaseth hym ; I pray to God he do so that it may be for y^e best. Than tharchbisshop rose, and said to the king : Syr, it is true al that euer my nece hath sayd : for, syr, I was present, and both saw and herde al thys that she hath sayd ; for, as God helpe me, yf I were a man of the world, & so y^t I might haue her to my wyfe, I wolde not presume to haue her for al the good of the world, w^out so be I had fyrst the chaplet. Than y^e Kyng of Valefound rose, and sayd : Accordynge to my mynde, it were best that all the hole chyualry, the whych ben here assembled, go al to the image : & fyrst let my lorde themperour begyn, for he is moost worthyest, both of noblenes, hauour, & ryches, where it shold seme that he is worthyest to haue the chaplet : and

if he faile therof, let than al other assaye euery mā after other, tyll it be gyuen to one or to other. In the name of God, sayde the Kinge of Orqueney, ye say ryght, & so let it be done. And themperour sayd he was wel agreed therto. Than Florence saide: I cannot tell who shall haue it; but God gyue me him in mariage, so that my hert may be in rest, peace, and ioy, and so y^t he may loue me, and I him.

Thā it was agreed on al partes, y^t who so euer had the chaplet shold haue the lady without any repellyng of that couenant; and therto Florence concented. And whan it was thus agreed on all partes, than there was laide before the fete of the ymage iiii. ryche cussghyns of silke and golde. And than it was ordeyned that the Kyng of Orqueny and Duke Philyp of Sabary shoulde kepe the place, and to se that none shold haue anye wronge there that daye: and also it was ordeyned that Arthur & Gouvernar sholde take hede and mark wel to whom the ymage wolde gyue vnto her chaplet. Than themperour sayd: Fayre lady! wyl ye be glad and I haue the chaplet? Syr, sayde Florence, by the reason of hauyng therof, ye shal be the more nere my hearte who so euer shal haue it; and y^e more ioye shal I haue, & the better shal he plesse me. Verely, sayd themperour, thā wil we go and assay: & therw^t he rose; and the Duke of Bygor, and therle of the Yle Perdue, led hym streyght to the ymage, and there he kneled styl on his knees fro the morning tyll it was nere euensonge tyme, but he was as nere as he was at the begīning: & at the last he rose ful of enuy & shame, and sore dyspleased in hys hearte; but he made, at that tyme, no semblaunt. Than after him went thither kinges, dukes, erles, barons, & knyghtes, eche after other, all suche as were to mary, but nothyng they were obtayned: so than there were no mo to assay but such as kept the place. And than Duke Philyp of Sabary wente to the ymage, for he was to mary, but he sped as hys felowes dyd before. Than the kyng commaunded that Arthur and Gouvernar shold go and assay. Than Arthur answered, and sayd: A! gentyll kyng! here hath bene this day many noble kynges and other prynces that hath fayled; wherfore than shold I presume to assay to attayne to that they haue all fayled. I thynke





it were but a folly for me to assay. Well, sayde the kynge, but I wyll that ye go and assay, according as the couenant is made. Ye truly, quod thẽperour, we wil y^t ye shal go. Syr, quod the Kyng of Orqueney, ye must nedes fulfyl the kinges plesure, and themperours. Wel, syr, sayde Arthur, I am content, sith it is their plesurs; and than he commaūded Gouvernar to go afore, & so he did, but no cōfort he had there. Than Arthur rose and went to the image: & as soon as he was on his knees, the ymage began to take colour as fresh & as quicke as though she had ben aliue, and fayre and swetly she turned her selfe toward Arthur, and did set the chaplet on his hed in the sight of al y^e assemble, wherwith themperour was right sore displeased. And whan the Duke of Bygor saw y^t, he was sore troubled in his mind, for he hated Arthur to the deth, in so muche y^t in a greate fury he stepte to Arthur and toke the chaplet fro his hed, and did set it on his own head; & al that whyle Arthur was on his knees. And whā Gouvernar sawe how that he toke away the chaplet fro his mayster & set it on hys own head, his bloud began to tremble for angre, and stept forth to the duke, and layde his handes on the chaplet in suche wise, that he rasshed it clene fro his head, and a great dele of hys heyre therwith, and so delyuered the chaplet to Florẽce, and she toke it and set it on her owne heade, and so than there was none that durst touch it. And whan the Duke of Bygor sawe how that Gouvernar had taken fro hym the chaplet & parte of his heyre, therwith he lyft vp hys fyst and strake Gouvernar a great blow on the cheke, and did hurte him righte yll, & caused him to blede sore at the mouth and at the nose. And whan Duke Philyp of Sabary sawe Gouvernar hurt and bledyng, he drew out his swerd and strake the Duke of Bygor in the myddes of the breste in suche wyse, that the poynt of hys sworde appeared a fote behynd at his back, and therwith the duke fell downe starke dead to the erthe. And whan the emperour saw his duke dead, he cryed on his knightes to arme theym, and to take Duke Philyp. Than themperours knightes assayled him on al partes, and he defended hym right valiauntly. Than the Kynge of Orqueney stepte forth, whan he sawe his neuewe in that case, and drew hys sworde and

layde on amonge them righte fierslye. Than Arthur dasht into the prese wyth Clarence, his good sworde, in hys hand, & he layde on and gaue suche strokes, that he bette downe knyghtes by great heapes. Than euery man ran to their harneys on both partes. Than Florence sayd to her senesshal: What, do you stand & loke on, and se Arthur in peryll of hys life? ye ought to sustaine his quarel. And whan her senesshall herde her saye so, he stepte oute into the felde, & cryed out as loude as he could: To harneys, syrs, incontinent, and help to ayde & socour Arthur! Than stepte forthe Brysebar, & syr Myles, & wel to the nombre of v.C. And whan the King Emendus sawe the matter began to kyndel so sharply, he toke his horse and rushte into the prese, and with great payne, & what with fayrenes & foulenes togyther, he departed them, & cōmaunded y^t none sholde be so hardy to stryke one stroke more as at that time. Than themperour came to the kyng, and said: Syr king, ye haue begyled vs and slayn our duke & many of our knyghtes; therefore, syr, be ye in certayne, that as longe as I lyue, warre shall not fayle you tyl the houre y^t I haue the head of the King of Orqueney, & of Philip hys neuewe, and of this knyght Arthur. Syr emperour, said Arthur, oftentimes a mā fayleth of y^t he desireth; nor I know not him y^t wil stryke of our heades, as long as I haue in my companye Clarence, my good sword. Ye, ye, syr emperour, saide the Kyng of Orqueney, be not halfe so hastye; for, or ye haue our heades, fyrst there wyl many lese theyrs: and one thing I assure you, y^t if it were not for the dysplesure of my lorde the kynge, I sholde go se you in your own coūtry betwene this and Ester, with suche a cōpany of people, y^t it shold be harde for you to nombre theym, for ye shal fynd them that lytell doubteth you. Than the King Emendus commaunded him to be in peace, & toke themperour by the hand, and sayd: Syr, be ye not dysplesed, ye & I wil go apart and agre ryght well together. I am content, sayd themperour. Than they auoyded from them euery mā. Than the kyng sayd: Syr, ye knowe that it was agreed bothe by you and by me, & by al other, that who so euer shold haue the chaplet should haue noo wronge, but should enioy it peasybly: therefore youre duke dyde amysse

to take it fro Arthurs heed. Syr, sayd themperour, though my duke dyde wronge, yet I was suffycient ynough to make amēdes for his trespase, though y^t Gouvernar had not taken it fro his heed & pulled away his here therw^t; & yet worse, what nede Duke Philip to slee him therefore? In the name of God, sayd y^e kynge, Duke Phylp dyde but his office; for he was one of the kepers of the felde, to se y^t none shold haue wronge: & your duke strake Gouvernar on the face; wherfore he had his deserte. Why, syr, sayd the emperour, though he strake y^e knight, yet was it no reason y^t Duke Phylp shoulde slee hym, & the Kynge of Orqueney to slee many other of my knyghtes. Syr, said the king, though the King of Orqueney was moued, he coude not chose, for he was puissaunt ynough to haue made amēdes for the deth of your duke that his neuewe slewe, but your knyghtes ran on hym to haue slaine hym in my presence: therfore blame not the kynge though he rescowed his neuewe, for a gentyll mannes herte ought not to fayle his knyghtes in time of nede, & specially his own neuewe. In the name of God, quod the emperour, he hath slayne my duke, & he is a duke, therefore I wyll that he dye for the cause, & thā it is duke for duke. Truely, sayd the kynge, this wer harde to do; for yf ye begin ony noyse or trouble, I haue grete fere that it wyl turne to your owne hurte, for it wil be ouermoch for you to acheue to that ye wold haue: but, syr, I se well ye be ryght sore dyspleased; but, syr, oftentimes deed men maketh peas, & by maryage many thynges are appeased: syr, I shall put to my payne, how y^t ye shal haue, for all this, Florēce, my doughter, to be your wyfe, on the condycion that all yll wylls & herte brennynges may be quenched on al partes, & euery thinge pardoned. And whan the emperour herde y^t, he smyled a lytell, & sayd: Veryly, syr, for y^e loue of Florence I would forgyue and pardon a right grete trespase. Syr, sayd the kynge, I wyll go speke w^t my lordes, & come againe to you incontinent.

Than the kyng departed fro hym, & called to hym his iiii. kinges, & the archebyssshop, & diuers other knyghtes, & sayd: Lordes! this emperour is ryght sore dyspleased; &, to saye the trowth, he hathe ryght good cause why; & I can fynde none other

agrement in hym, but eyther he wyl haue Duke Phylippes heed, or elles he wyl come on vs right shortly with a grete hoost, or elles without he haue Florence, my doughter: this is the amendes that he wyl haue for the deth of his duke. Therefore, gentle kinges and lordes, shewe me your myndes in y^t behalfe. Syr, sayde the Kyng of Valefoūde, it is my minde & aduyse, y^t it is good to eschewe al perilles y^t may happe to come, bothe to the body & to the soule, & to our hauoures & frendes, for a thyng of a lytle cost. Ye se wel how that thēperour is the moost chefe cristen prynce of al the world, & ryght puyssaūt both of hauour & of frendes: therefore, syr, be ye not abasshed to giue him Florence, your doughter, for therby shal ye winne many grete frendes: therefore, syr, it were better for you to gyue her to hym, than to this knight Arthur, of whome we know nothing but that he is a knyghte ryghte good, faire, & beauteous. And in very dede so he is, sir, quod y^e King of Mormal: this same is myne opinion. And myn also, sayd the Kyng of Ismaelyte. In the name of God, sayd the Kyng of Orqueney, ayenst that I haue agreed ones vnto, and set therto my seale, shall I neuer be contrary; for I wyl neuer breke myne othe, nor I wil neuer loue themperour. Nor I also, saide y^e archebisshop: by the faith that I owe vnto you, I shal neuer be of that accorde, y^t themperour shold haue Florence. Than the Kyng Emendus, & in the name of the other thre kinges, answered, & sayde: Well, syrs, I that am kyng ouer you all, shall agre you in this matter well ynough: ye shall se right wel what I shal do in this mater.

Than the Kyng of Orqueney, and the archebisshop, departed fro the counseyle not contente in theyr myndes. And whan the King Emendus sawe that the Kyng of Orqueney, and the archebisshop, his brother, were departed from hym, he went streyght to themperour, & his iii. kynges with hym, and sayd: Syr, we wil be your frendes and wel wyllers, and ye also ours, & are content to fulfyll youre wyl, so that ye wyl in like wyse do to vs. Fyrst, syr, we wyl that ye pardon and forgyue the Kyng of Orqueney, & Duke Phylip, hys neuewe, and to all other, all maner of yll wyl that ye haue to theym, for all maner of dedes done by

them or any of theirs; and on this condycyon I and these thre kinges giue you Florence, my doughter, in maryage, and I put you in possession of her by this gloue: and so drew it of his hand and gaue it to themperour. And he receiued it w^t great ioye, and thanked them right hertely; & there pardoned all the yll wyl that he had to any body: & so there they toke eche other by y^e hand, & went talkyng togyther to theyr tentes.

CAP. LXXXIII.

HOWE THAT PROSERPYNE, QUENE OF Y^e FAYRY, WHO RESEMBLED TO FLORENCE, LAYD HER DOWNE IN FLORENCE BEDDE IN FLORENCE STEDE, AND SENTE HER TO THE PORTE NOYRE WYTH THE ARCHEBYSSHOP AND ALL HER KNYGHTES.

WHAN the Kinge of Orqueney & tharchebyshop were departed fro y^e King Emendus, & sawe how y^e the kynge had graunted Florence, his doughter, to themperour, they wente streyght to Florence, wher as they found Arthur, Duke Phyllyp, and Gouvernar: and they were all styl armed, to thentent to defend them yf any nede were. Than the Kyng of Orqueney caused them to be vnarmed, and toke Arthur by the hande, and sayde: Syr, as longe as I lyue & haue any lond I shal not fayle you; but I shal ayde you to dye in the quarell, to defende your ryghte. Syr, sayde Arthur, God, that all thynges fourmed, kepe you, & rewarde your gentylnes. Go we, quod the kyng, & speke with Florence.

And so they went to her; and as than she was styll syttyng on her bedde, all afrayde of the bronte and fraye that was there. And the Quene of Orqueney sate wepyng for fere of y^e kinge her husbände. Than there sat downe the kynge, tharchebyssshop, Arthur, and Gouvernar; & also there was the mayster and Duke Phyllyp. Than the kynge sayd to Florēce: Madame, be ye in

peace & rest, and doubte ye of nothyng: but it is soo, my lord the king, your fader, hath gyuen you to the emperour, and hath put hym in possession of you by the gloue of hys hande; and al the other kinges are of his accorde: but tharchebysshop, your vncle, and I, are departed fro them, bycause we wyll not consent therto in no wyse: therefore, madame, may it please you nowe to shewe vs your mynde, wheder ye be content to haue him to your husbōde or not; for yf it please you, it behoueth vs to be content: and yf it please you not to haue hym, here I offre my selfe to you, that or he haue you ayenst your wyl, I shall rather aduenture to lese my heed from the shoulders; and I shal put in ieopardy to slee the emperour in defendyng of thys gentylman, Arthur, in his ryght, yf ye be so content. And whan Florēce herde him saye so, she began right sore to wepe. And whan she might speke, she sayd: A! gentyl kynge, now I se well I haue no mo frendes but you & suche other as be here present. Alas! I am of y^t estate that I ought of right to haue many mo: but whan my fader and myn owne men fayle me, alas! to whome shall I cōplayne me? Alas! vnkinde fader, wyll ye gyue me him whome that I hate mortally, & take fro me hym that I loue faythfully? And therewith her herte was so oppressed w^t bytter sorowe, that she fell on so sore a weping, that it was grete pyte to behold her. And whan she myght somewhat speke, she sayd: Certainly I had rather dye than to haue the emperour: and, as God helpe me, ye be all my frendes, and so I wil retaine you as longe as the world serueth me, the whiche yet somewhat cōforteth me; wherfore I wyll no lenger hyde my herte fro you. And so she tourned her selfe toward Arthur, & said: Beholde here hym who hathe my chaplet; my desteny is on him; wherfore I wyl haue none other but him: for hym I loue, & wyll do. And whā the King of Orqueney herde her saye soo, he had great ioye, and sayde: Madame, we be all your owne men & frendes, & of your cōseyle, and would alwayes your honour & profyte: and, as God helpe me, ye can not do better than to set your hert on this noble knyght Arthur; for better, more wyse, more goodlyer thā he is, cā not be fōūde: and syth it pleaseth you, as for my parte I am the same accorde, & to hym I

offre now my selfe here present. Now let all other speke, euery man for him selfe. Thā the archebyssshop sayde: Fayre lady, ye are my nece, and I am youre vnclē: in good fayth I am agreed to your pleasure, and I promyse hym fayth and trouth, and to ayde hym ayenst all persons. And I also promyse the same, sayd Duke Phylp. Than the mayster rose, & sayd: Madame, I am your clerke, and alwayes I truste I haue counsayled you to your honour & profyte; and I alowe you in this matter, and am faythfully agreed therto; but I counsayle you let my lorde here, tharchebyssshop, ensure you bothe togyder, hande to hande. Than thei al answered w^t one voyce: The mayster sayth ryght wel, & all we be agreed therto. Than the byssshop toke Arthur by the hande, and the ladies hande also, and there dyde ensure theim togyder w^t wordes of matrimony, wherof eche of them had gret ioye.

Whan that Florence and Arthur were thus ensured togyder, the King of Orqueney said: Syrs, now haue we purchased warre with the kynge & with themperour; for as soone as they know of this mater they wyl be ryght sore dyspleased w^t vs all: therefore now let vs se by what meanes, eyther by warre or force, or how this mater may be brought to passe.

And as thei thus talked togyder, sodeynly there sate on the bedde by Florence, Proserpine, Quene of the Fairy. And whā thei beheld her, thei had wōder of her sodeyn comyng, and thei coude not well know her fro Florence, they resembled so nere togyder. But thā Proserpine said to the king: Syr, ye demaūde and study how ye may bring about this mater: I shal shew you: I am she that did desteny on Florēce y^t she shold haue Arthur; therfore I shall shew her howe she shall do: therfore, Florence, fayre daughter, sēde ye incontynent Gouvernar and Brysebar to your castell of Clere Toure; & let al your tentes, & paulyons, & suche other abyementes of warre as ye haue there, be conuayed in all haste to the Porte Noyre; and garnyshe that castel richely and surely in suche wyse, y^t ye may be able to sustayne the defence of an hole hoost: for ther shal be made ayenst you right grete warre; for the King Emendus, your fader, wyl be so yll content with you & with Arthur, that yf he might haue you bothe in y^t fury, he wold cause

you bothe to dye a shamefull deth ; for he hath now so grete loue to thēperour, y^t they be as al one : but, for all y^t, ther is not now soo grete loue bytwene them, but I shal cause here after as grete war bitwene them ; so that eche of thē shal be desyrous to sle other : wherfore, faire doughter Florence, ryse out of your bedde, & apparaile your selfe, & do on the maisters gowne & his hat, & mou^t on your horse : & take the Quene of Orquene y^w you, & also tharchebysshop, your vncle, & Duke Phylp, and al your other knyghtes, & ride ye streyght to the Porte Noyre : & the King of Orquene, here present, & the maister, & Arthur, shall abyde here styl with me, for I wyll lye here still in your bedde in y^e stede of you, for ye know well there is no creature can know the one of vs fro y^e other. Go ye your waies, & let me alone with the remnaūt of the mater. Madame, said the maister, for Goddes sake thinke wel on the honour of my lady Florēce, & we shall by-leue you wel.

Than Florēce departed her knightes asonder, & dyde sende them one after another all to Argence, & cōmaūded them there to abyde for her. So they al departed, & within foure dayes they aryued at Argence, & there they founde the fayre lady Margarete of Argenton, who was come the daye before frō the Porte Noyre ; and she receyued them with ioyfull chere. And there they shewed her how thei wer come thyder to abyde on the comyng of theyr lady Florence : & whan she hearde that, she was right ioyful, and caused all her house to be apparayled ryght richely, to thentent to receyue Florence right honourably, & sent for many of the gentylmen of her cōūtre to gyue attendaūce on her.

Than Gouvernar & Brysebar departed fro Florence, & wēt to y^e Clere Toure, & conuayed al her stuffe to the Porte Noyre, bothe tresour & abyementes of warre, & vatayle sufficient to garnysshe the hous withal for the space of vii. yere. And thei had xxvii. charyottes cōtinually carieng vii. wekes togyder, of such stuffe as pertayned to Florence and to the furnysshing of the place, so that it had of euery thing sufficient for the space of vii. yere.

CAP. LXXXIV.

HOW THAT THE LADY MARGARET OF ARGENTON, WITH ALL HER
HOLE BARONY, WENTE AND METTE FLORENCE, AND RECEYUED
HER IN TO ARGENCE W^t RYGHTE GRETE FEEST AND IOYE.

AND the third day after that Florence knightes wer departed fro her, thā she, and the Quene of Orqueney, and tharchebyssshop, departed, & went fyrste to the cite of Pancopone, the which pertained to the byssshop. And ther he commaūded al his people to be readye on a day warning in their best apparaile for the warre. And in lykewise dyd Gouvernar in the realme of Blaūche Toure. So than Florence departed fro Pancopone, & went streight to Argence. And as soone as the lady Margarete had knowledge that she was two daies iorney fro Argēce, she mounted on her horse, and v.C. in her company, and went and encountred the lady Florēce of Soroloys. And whan she met her, she did righte humbly salute her, & said: Madame, ye be right hertely welcome in to this countre; and, madame, beholde me here, who is and shall be youre humble damoyssel, euer to be redy at your noble cōmaundement. Certainly, fayre lady Margarete, said Florēce, I take you and wyll doo for my specyall frende and faithful louer. Than y^e lady Margarete went to the byssshop and to Duke Phylip, and right swetely dyde salute them. And than she demaunded of Florence how it was with Arthur? And she answered, and sayd: Fayre lady Margarete, he is abyden in the courte wyth the King of Orqueney and with mayster Steuen. And I praye you, madame, how dooth he? Verely, sayd she, right well. Than am I glad, sayd the lady Margarete, for Arthur is my lorde and chefe fader; for he hath rēdred again to me my londe, wherof I was dyssheryted by the neuw of the Duke of Bigor. Wel, sayd Florence, care not for y^t, for ye be as now well reuenged both of the vncle & of the neuewe. A! madame, said she, blessyd be them that hath brought that about.

And thus they rode forth on theyr way, & thei encoûtred syr Myles, & syr Artalde, & dyuerse other knyghtes pertaining to Florence, & al other knyghtes of that cōtre drewe thyder by grete flockes. And whā thei wer nere to the cite of Argens, than ther yssued out al the honest burgeises of the cite, riding on good horses, and faire faucons & sparhawkes on their fistes; and they were wel to the nombre of fifty, well arayed al in one sute, halfe scarlet & halfe grene, with many tabours & trompettes before theym. Than the bysshop sawe well how that the cyte of Argence was ryght noble & goodly, for he sawe y^e bryght sonne glimmering on y^e faire chirches & hye steples, couered al with fayre lede; & also he sawe the riche baners and stremers pyght out of wyndowes of the fayre houses: and the batylmentes were pyght full of sheldes, basenettes, helmes, & speres, to thentent to shewe y^e strēgth of the cite; & the stretes wer hāged with clothes of golde and of silke, & with rede sendall chaungeable with grene. And all the belles of the towne solēpny did ring soo, that it was grete ioye to se and to beholde the noblenes of that cyte.

In thys maner Florence entred in to the cyte, hauing in her company beyonde xv. hondred knyghtes: and the burgeyses of the cyte moūted vp into theyr windowes to behold Florence, who was led bytwene the bysshop and Duke Phylip. And thus thei rode til they came to the palays, and ther descended, & so moūted vp into y^e hal. Than Florence entred into her chambre, & apparayled her: & by that tyme her diner was redy, and the tables ready couered. Than Florence, and the archebisshop, and all other, sate theym downe to dyner, and were ryght rychely serued. And soo there Florence soiourned the space of viii. dayes.

Now let vs leue Florēce at Argence, & retourne to thēperour, & to King Emendus, and to Proserpyne, who was layde in Florence bedde in the stede of her.

CAP. LXXXV.

HOWE THAT PROSERPYNE WAS ENSURED TO THEMPEROUR IN THE STEDE OF FLORENCE; & HOW THAT THE KING BANYSSHED OUT OF HIS COUNTRE THE KINGE OF ORQUENEY, & ALSO THE KYNGE OF VALEFOUNDE, & MAYSTER STEUEN, AND ARTHUR.

So it was, that whā Florēce was departed fro y^e courte of King Emendus, her fader, & that he had gyuen her to the emperour, thā eche of them went into theyr owne tentes to diner. And the King of Orqueney, who was abiden stil in Florence tente wyth Proserpyne, Quene of the fayry, who resembled soo nere Florence that the one coude not be knowen fro the other, and ther he & Arthur dined w^t her. And after dyner themperour came to King Emēdus, & said: Syr, ye haue giuē me Florēce, your doughter; &, syr, I know wel how that the King of Orqueney & Arthur be stil w^t her in her tent; & thei haue bene alwaies cōtrary to me, wherfore I doute me leest thei tourne Florence mynde fro mewarde: therfore, syr, I pray you let vs go & fiaūce her this night, & let vs be maryed to morow. Sir, said the king, I am content: & I promise you, y^t al suche, who soo euer they be, y^t be contrary ayenst your mynde, shal incōtinent forsake my company.

Than themperour, and the king, and the other thre kinges, wēt streight to Florēce tēt; & as sone as they wer entred, the King of Orqueney, & the mayster, & Arthur, rose, & welcomed them. Than the king sate him downe on the one syde of the bed, and the emperour on the other syde. Than the king sayde to Proserpyne, wenyng to hym it had ben his doughter Florēce: Fayre doughter, it behoueth you to be fiaunced this night to this emperour, and to morow ye shal be wedded w^t grete ioye. Well, syr, sayd Proserpyne, syth it is your pleasure I am cōtent; let it be done incontynent. Than the kyng demaunded for tharchebyshop, his broder, to thētent to ensurē them togider. Syr, said the maister, he is gone to Pancopone, for a besynes y^t he hath to do there; &

Duke Phylp also. And wher is Florence senesshall, and al other knyghtes? Syr, surely they bene al gone w^t hym. In the name of God, syr, sayd themperour, the archebisshop hath ben alwayes cōtrary to me in y^t I should haue Florence: therefore, syr, neuer trust me but y^t he is gone to do some manor of treason, to the entent y^t I should not haue her. Than stept forth the mayster, & sayd: Syr emperour, ye saye not wysely to call the archebyssshop traitour, or to say y^t he seketh to werke any treason ayenst you: it is to largely sayde; for ther was neuer as yet any noble man of Soroloys that euer dyde any treason ayenst you, or ayenst any other mā liuing: and though that he be not of the accorde of this mariage, he dooth but ryghte; for, sauynge the honour of my lorde the kyng, here present, al that be of that accord are forsworne, & haue brokē their promesses & couenaūtes, & dooth ayenst theyr own seales: &, as for me, as lōg as I lyue shall I neuer accorde therto. No! mayster, said the king, wyll ye not than accorde therto, but holde all other forsworne? By the fayth that I owe vnto God, yf ye wer not the son of a king, I should make you wel to know how ye haue spoken folisshely here in my presence: but thus moch I say vnto you, I charge you incontinent that ye auoyde this paulyon; and I defende you the comynge agayne to my syghte, and dyscharge you out of Florence cōuseyle. Well, syr, sayd the mayster, syth I se than that I must nedes leue your courte and comynge before you, & banysshed fro y^e cōuseyle of my lady for this emperoure, here present; wherefore let hym be in certayne y^t, as longe as I liue, he shal neuer put ringe on my lady Florēce finger, nor wedde her, for all the power y^t he hath or can haue. Than the kynge was sore dyspleased, & rose, & had thought to haue striken the mayster; but the King of Mormal and the King of Ismaelyte dyde holde hym; and therwith the maister went out of the paulyon. And whan the Kynge of Valefounde sawe his sone cast out of the courte, & how the king would haue stryken hym, he rose vp, & sayde to the kynge: Syr, for the eschewyng of all yll & trouble, before this tyme I was agreed that this emperour shoulde haue your doughter; wherin now I confesse me y^t I was forsworne, and dyde therin cōtrary to myn owne seale &

promesse; the which consentement now here I openly reuoke & deny: for, as God helpe me, I wil be no lenger forsworne: therefore I say to this emperour y^t he take her not; for, yf he do, let him be in certaine that ther is, and shal be, in the realme of Valefounde, a king who is not his frende; but he is, & shall be, hys mortall enemy. And whan Kyng Emendus herde hym speke in y^t maner, he was right sore dyspleased, for he loued and bileued hym ryght well before, & sayd: Syr kynge, eyther consent to this maryage, or elles forsake the presēce of me, and shortly auoyde this paulyon. Well, syr, than I wyll departe; and I warraunt you I wyll noo more desyre to come in to your syght: I say no more, but God giue grace ye do well. And therwith he went out of the paulyon, and wente to hys son, mayster Steuē.

Than the King of Orqueneý rose vp, and said to the king: Syr, I haue grete meruaile where ye haue taken this counseyle, to enstraūge your self fro your frendes and counseyllers: veryly, syr, ye be in an yll mynde in this case, & al for this emperour, who shall neuer do you so moche good: but, by the fayth y^t I owe to my lady Florēce, yf he wer not here in your presence I should take his heed fro his sholdres; & let hym take good hede, that after that he is maryed, that he cary her not a myle out of this place, but I shal be ther redy to encoūtre him, & not to his plesure. What! said the king, do ye menace & threte him here before me? Shortly I charge you auoyde this paulyon, & beware y^t I se you no more in my syght! & in the despyte of you all, themperour shal haue Florēce, my doughter. Well, syr, said the Kynge of Orqueneý, syth ye haue banysshed me out of your courte & of your presēce, I assure you I am able ryght well to withstande your malyce: but, syr, I couēseyle you conuey this emperour surely whan he departeth in to his owne coūtre, lest y^t he be not encoūtrede wthall to his dyspleasure. Than the King of Orqueneý toke Arthur by the hande, & said: Syr, come ye on wth me, & leue this courte, for no noble man ought to abyde here. Syr, said Arthur, I wyll go wth you wth a right good wil.

Than they departed out of the pauilion, & ther thei fōude the King of Valefōude & mayster Steuen, and to them he sayd: Now,

syr, we be al banished out of y^e courte of King Emendus: God now be our helpe. Than they trussed vp their tentes, & sente theyr people euery man home to his owne coūtre. And so than they mouēd vpon theyr horses, & so departed: & they had not ryden a lege & a halfe but y^t the King of Valefounde was in a sodayne study. Than the Kyng of Orqueneý demaūded of hym what he ayled to study? Syr, quod he, I muse in what maner we may do anoyaunce to this emperour, who wold haue our lady ayenst her owne wyl & ours, the which sore greueth me. Well, syr, said the Kyng of Orqueneý, care not for y^t mater, for I ensure you he shall not wedde her this yere. Syr, sayd he, it can be none otherwyse, for themperour & the kyng her fader wyl now lede her to Cornite, and ther fiaūce her ayenst her wyl. Wel, syr, sayde the Kyng of Orqueneý, fere ye not that: for be ye in certaine, that, as for Florence, she is all redy at the cyte of Argence, wher as she abydeth for vs. Why, said the Kyng of Valefounde, & who is it than that lieth at Florence bed in the stede of her, and is so like her? I shal shewe you, said the King of Orqueneý. Herde ye neuer speaking of the Quene of the ladyes of the fayry that be in the Mount Peryllous, wher as Florēce was cōuayed as soone as she was borne? Yes, mary! quod the other king, I haue herd therof diuers tymes. Well, syr, than soo moche I saye to you, that she that lyeth in my ladyes bed is Proserpyne, Quene of the fayry: & she did desteny her at her natiuyte that she shold be lyke in al thinges to her; & so she is, as ye may se: wherfore ye shall knowe full wel by to morow this time, that ther was neuer emperour and king so abused and abasshed as thei shal be. In the name of God, said the King of Valefounde, I neuer herde spekyng of this mater before: but let vs haste vs, and so speke with my lady Florence at Argence, and there let vs aduyse ferder what shall be done in this mater. Syr, ye saye ryght well, and so let vs do; for I am sure we shall haue grete warre.

Than they sente two squyers before theim to Florence, to giue her knowledge how that they wold be with her the Wednesdaye nexte after, by masse tyme. And whan Florēce knew that, she had ryght grete ioye, and caused incontinent the places to be

apparayled where as they should lodge. And than the archebyssshop and Duke Philyp rose, and went and encountred them; & whan they were mette togyder, they made right grete ioye eche of other; and Duke Philip enbraced Arthur, and the byshop was with y^e kinges, and so entred in to the citeye. And all the burgeyses & comynalte of the cite made great feest of Arthur, for he semed to thē soo gracious & so fayre, y^t they all sayd: A! good Lorde! what a noble couple should it be bitwen our lady Florēce & this noble knight Arthur! Wolde to God he had wedded her! Than they all alyghted at the palays, & ther Florence mette them, and enbraced euery king eche after other, & in lyke wise did the fayre lady Margarete. Than Florēce came to Arthur, and said: Myn owne swete loue, ye be ryght hertely welcome. Myn owne dere lady, God encrease in you noble boūte & honour. And than the lady Margarete ran to mayster Steuen, and eche of thē right swetely enbraced other. Than they went all to theyr chambres, & apparayled them; & thā they went to dyner, and were serued right rychely. Than al these kinges, & Florence, & the lady Margarete, departed, and wēt to the Porte Noyre, & commaunded all theyr people to drawe theym thyderwarde as shortly as they coude. And so thei rode forth, and on a Tewesdaye betimes they ariued at the Porte Noyre. Than Florence wente vp to her palais, where as she had neuer ben before, and than she thanked Arthur in that he had fordone thenchauntementes the aduentures of y^t place. And Gouvernar and Brysebar had aparailed that place in euery thyng that was behouable. And thus they were in great ioy and tryumphe the space of viii. daies, & than these kynges and Florence wente into a fayre chambre to counsayle; & the bishop, and Arthur, Duke Philyp, & the mayster, were with them. And than they recoūted to Florence how y^t they were departed oute of the court in gret displesure, and how that the King Emendus had banysshed them al out of his presence: and also we know wel that as sone as he hath knowledge that ye be here, and we with you, we shall haue sharpe and great war made vnto vs, wherfore it is conuenient that we aduise wel what shal be done in this mater.

Than y^e maister rose, and said: Lordes! if ye thinke it to be done, I shal shew you mine aduyse. And they all answered, and said: Maister, say what ye wil, it shal plese vs right wel to giue you audience. Than the maister sayd: Madam, ye be the propre and rightfull heyre of Soroloys, and our propre lady, and we al your mē: the dyscorde that is betwene my lorde youre father, and vs, moueth properlye by the reason of you, and not for any tres-passe that euer we dyd hym; therfore, madame, it is reason that ye take vpon you this quarell and busynes, and take your herte to you, & be not to softe in this matter: for whan my lorde the kyng, your father, shall be come hyther with al his power to assyege you, as I am sure he wyl do, he shall not haue so hardy a knyghte in al his company, but he shall be aferde to gyrde hys sworde about hym, to come agenst your company; for ye be a greate quene and a puissaunt: therfore sende for your people, and let Duke Phylp do in lyke case, and my lady Margarete also: and whan al your people be assembled together, who so euer than wyl be so hardy to assayle you, let hym be sharply answered and defended; and, madame, beholde here Arthur, to whome this matter toucheth ryght nere, who is faythful yours and ye his: therfore me thinketh it were reason that he were chyefe capytayne of this matter, and let hym maintayn this war fiersly and vertuously; and the King of Orqueney, and the Kyng of Valefound, my father, let theym retourne into theyr own realmes; for paraenture the King Emen-dus wyl sende for theym agayne, and wyll repent hym in that he hath banished them out of his sight: and if they fall into accorde with him agayne, than shal they doo mucche good for vs in this mater with the kinge: for than they shall shew him his folly in that he would mare mi lady Florence, his doughter, agenst her wyl; and how that he doth gret wronge to make warre agenst Arthur: but, syr Arthur, accordynge to myne aduise, be ye of good herte; and if they wyll nedes make war agenst you, do to this emperoure as mucche damage as euer ye can. Than the Kyng of Valefound sayd: Fayre sonne! verely ye haue wel and wysely sayde: I am agreed; let it be done as ye haue sayd. As God helpe me, sayd the byshop, I am agreed with the same saying:

and to the same they were al agreed. Than the Kinge of Valefounde sayd to Arthur: Syr, we be all establysshed that ye shall haue the hole conduite of this matter: therfore do your deuoyre, and here we gyue you the charge of my lady Florence, and the bysshop, her vncle, shall abyde wyth you, and Duke Philyp also, and with him maister Steuen, my son: and if ye haue anye nede, sende vs worde, and we shal nat fayle my lady at no time: and yf we happen to fall at any accorde with the king, than shall we blame him for his folly: and as for vs & our people, we faythfully promise you, that if any sword be drawn agenst you, we shal be euer redy to reuenge it to the best of our powers. That shal not be fayled, sayd the Kyng of Orqueney. Syrs, I thanke you, sayd Florence. So than they establisthed Arthur chefe capytayne of y^e matter: & so the two kinges departed out of the coūseyle, and toke leue of Florence and Arthur, & of al other, and returned into their own coūtries.

Now let vs leue to speke of them, and returne to the emperour and Kyng Emendus, howe that they were amused at y^e churchedore, whā they had wend to haue married Florence.

CAP. LXXXVI.

HOW THAT PROSERPYN, QUENE OF THE FAIRY, WAS LEDDE TO THE CHURCHE TO HAUE BENE WEDDED TO THEMPEROURE, WENYNG THAT IT HAD BENE FLORENCE; BUT WHAN THE BISSHOP HAD THOUGHTTE TO HAUE PUT THE WEDDYNG RYNGE ON HER FYNGER, SODENLYE SHE VANYSSHED AWAYE, SO THAT NONE WYST WHETHER SHE BECAME: AND SOO THAN THEY STODE ALL ABASSHED AS THOUGHE THE CLOUDES HAD FALLEN FROM HEAUVEN.

So it was, that whan the Kyng of Valefound, and the Kyng of Orqueney, was departed from Kyng Emendus in greate displesure;

how be it, the king as than, whan he sawe that they were gone, he repented him of his foly; how be it, he made no maner of semblaūt, for the loue of themperour, but sayd to hym: Syr, let vs go to the citie of Cornyte, and there shall ye fyaunce Florence, and to morow be maryed to her. Syr, with a right good wyl, sayd themperour.

Than Proserpin was apparayled, and ledde forth to Cornyte, where there was readye the bishop of Pancopone; and as sone as they were come to the citie, thā incontinent themperour was ensured to Proserpyne in the stede of Florēce, & so there was gret feast and ioy al y^t nyght tyl euery man went to their restes; & in the mornynge they arose, and Proserpyn was apparailled right rychely; & so the King of Mormal, & the King of Ismaelyt, dyd lede her to church: and as sone as she came to the churche dore, there was redy the byshop of Pancopone, reuest in his pontificalibus, & there dydde axe the banes betwene thē, & so proceded forth in the wordes of matrymony. And whan the byshop thought to haue set the weddyng rynge of her fynger, sodeynly she was vanysshed awaye, so that none knew where she was become: wherew^t the kynges, dukes, erles, barons, and all other, were as gretly abasshed as though they had tombled out of the cloudes. Thā the byshop blyssed him selfe, and did caste holy water round about hym, and euery man sayde, thys is a wondrous case! we trowe we be enchanted! how be it, neuerthesse they herde out the masse w^t gret deuocyon, praying to God to kepe theym from the illusions of the fende of hell: & whan the masse was done, they returned to the palais, and al y^t day they wer sore troubled in their hertes; & so thre dayes after they serched continually all about the citie for Florence, and on the iiii. day there came a knight to the palays, & dyd salute King Emendus, and thēperour, and sayd: Syr, I se wel ye be sore troubled bycause of Florence; but I can shewe you tydynges right wel where she is: surelye, syrs, she departed fro Argence the Wednesday next after Myghelmas day, and in her company mo than xv. C. knyghtes, and, syr, w^t her is y^e archebisshop, your brother, & Duke Philip of Sabary, and are as now at the castel of the Porte Noyre: & she hath caused the

place to be fortified w^t artyllary, and with al maner of vytayle sufficient to fynd a siege for the space of vii. yere : & Florence hath sent al about for men of warre ; and Duke Philip hath also sent into his own country for al his power ; and as for al the power of Argenton is there al redy with her ; & also there is with her, Arthur and Gouvernar, maister Steuen & syr Brysebar, and all her hole chyualry. Ye, frend ! sayd the kyng, is all this true ? Ye, syr, as God helpe me, for I haue sene al this with myne eyen. Of the Kyng of Orqueney, and of the Kyng of Valefound, can ye shewe me any word ? sayde the kyng. Syr, I can shew you certayne word of them, for I encountred thē but late, as they were rydyng into theyr own countryes. As God helpe me, sayde the kyng, I repente me that I spake to them so folyshly this last day ; but I dyd it in a great displesure. In y^e name of God, syr, sayde themperour, if ye haue done thē any trespassse, ye maye ryght well make them amendes : and in your so doying ye shal do ryght well. Verely, syr, sayde the kyng, and so wyl I do : but what coūsaile & remedy shal we make for this knyght Arthur, who hath thus taken away Florence, my doughter ? But, by my crowne, yf I may take them, they shall bothe suffre a shamefull deth ! nor, as long as I lyue, I shall neuer sease tyll I haue them ; and thā shall the drabbe, my doughter, be mured vp in a stone wall, & the false rybaud Arthur hanged by the necke ! But I vnderstand they haue furnisshed y^e Porte Noyre for the space of vii. yere ; & also they puruay thē of people as muche as they may. Syr, quod the knight that brought the tydings, y^t is of trouth. Wel, syr, sayd themperour, I shal shew you what we shall do : ye shal send for al your power, and so shal I do for mine, & so let vs besiege y^e castel of the Port Noyre ; and thoughe y^t it were made of yron & stele, yet shal it not endure agenst our strength. As God help me, syr, sayd the kyng, the castel doubteth no man : but I alow well let vs besiege the castel round about tyl we haue famisshed them ; for otherwise shall we neuer haue the place : therefore let us sende for our people tyl we haue sufficient. Ye sai right wel, quod themperour ; I wyl go & return into mine own coutry, and ye shal fynd me, and I lyue, at the Porte Noyre w^tin xv. dayes of Ester next

comyng. And there shal ye fynd me also, sayd the kyng. Than theimperour cōmaunded to trusse al his stuffe, and so toke leue of the king, and departed into Ynde.

And as soone as the emperour was departed, thā y^e king sayd too the Kynge of Mormal: Syr, goo ye home into your own country, and somō vp al your men of warre, and mete with me at the Porte Noyre the xv. day of Ester; and I prai you speke with the King of Valefound, and make the peace betwene hī and me, and desyre him to be at Argence the sayd daye wyth al hys power, to go wyth me to the Porte Noyre; and shewe hym that I shal make too hym a large amendes for that I haue done too hym. In lyke wyse he sayde to the Kynge of Ismaelyte that he shoulde speake wyth the Kynge of Orqueney; and so they promysed to doo, and departed and wente eche of them into theyr owne cuntryes: and than they sente al about for theyr people, and shewed the other twoo kinges theyr message that they hadde fro the Kynge Emendus, and how that the kyng desyred them to be at Argence the xv. day after Ester. And they answered, how that they wolde not fayle to be there at y^e day: & so eche of them apparayled them self, & all their people, in as hasty wyse as they could. And the emperoure, and the Kynge Emendus, also made them redy in al hast to go to the Porte Noyre: and at the emperours cōmaundement there came wyth hym the King Godyfer, & the Kynge Jonas, and the Kynge Comedos, & all theyr hole power.

CAP. LXXXVII.

HOWE THAT ARTHUR SENT GOUERNAR TO HIS COSYN HECTOR, DUKE OF ORGOULE, DESIRINGE HIM TO COME AND HELP TO SOCOUR HIM AGENST THE EMPEROUR OF YNDE, & AGENST THE KING EMENDUS, WHO WOLDE BESIEGE HIM IN THE CASTEL OF Y^e PORT NOYRE.

So it was, that whan the King of Orquency, and the Kynge of Valefound, wer departed from Arthur out of the Porte Noyre, as ye haue hearde here before, than wⁱⁿ a lytell space after, there came to Arthur a spye streyghte fro Cornyte, and there he recounted to Arthur all the delyng of themperour, and of Kyng Emēdus; and howe that they somon togither great people to come to assyege them at the Porte Noyre. And whan Arthur herd that, he sayd to Duke Philip: Wel, syr, than there is no more to do, but let euery man do the best they can: wherefore it is tyme that ye sende to Sabary, to your senesshal, that he bryng hyther to you al your chyualry now at this Ester: and ye, my lady Florence, send forth your letter to youre realme of Blaūche Toure; and let my lady Margaret sende to Argence; and I shall send to Orgoule to my cosin Hector. Why than, said Florence, haue ye than a cosin in these partes? Ye, madame, by the fayth that I owe to your grace: for, if I myght haue hym ones by my syde, I doubt but lytel the malyce of this emperoure. Than she made her letters, and sente syr Neuelon to the Clere Toure, & so departed.

And whan he was there aryued, anon he fōūd syr Perdycas, who was chiefe gouernar of all that realme of Clere Towre, and to him he deliuered Florence letters: and incontynent on the syght of the letters he somoned togither al the noble men of the citie, and of al the hole realme: and whan they were assembled togither, they were to the nombre of xxx. thousande men of warre: and so they put them selfe streight into y^e way to go to theyr lady, Florence, to the Port Noyre. And also the lady Margarete sente syr

Myles vnto Argence, to syr Emery, who brought with him well xxx. thousande. And Duke Philyp sente syr Brysebar into Sabary, to gentyll Clemenson, his marshal, who brought with hym xx. thousande. And Gouvernar went to the citie of Orgoule, to the noble Duke Hector, cosyn to Arthur, and than it was shewed hym howe that the duke was at Brule with the Countesse of Brule, who as than was a lytel diseased : & Gouvernar rode so longe, that on a Saterday betimes he aryued there : than he mounted vp the stayres and entred intoo the hall, and there he founde Hector syttyng by the countesse, his mother in lawe, eating together of a dyshe of fysshe. And as sone as Hector saw Gouvernar, he rose and enbraced hym, & his herte reioysed for gladnes whā he saw people of his own country ; and than he demaunded tydings of his cosin Arthur : and Gouvernar answered, and sayd : Syr, he hertely cōmaundeth hym to you, and desireth you to come to helpe to socour him agenst his enemyes. And I pray you what be they, sayd Hector, that be his enemies ? for as long as I lyue, what so euer they be, though they be neuer so greate of degree of puis-saunt, but I shal make them to tremble & quake, if they wyll abyde and loke me in the face. Than the countesse sayd : Fayre sonne ! I wolde ye should not spare to helpe to socoure our frende and louer, the noble Arthur. Than the Duchesse of Orgoule, the fayre lady Alice, enbraced Gouvernar, and demaunded of hym how y^e Arthur dyd ? Fayre lady ! he hertely commaūdeth hym to you. Thā he sayde to Hector : Syr, haste you, for it is nede.

Thā Hector called too hym syr Octebon, his senesshal, and commaunded him that he shold sende into al the country of the erledome of Brule, that al that myght bere harneys, that in al the hast they shold come to hym too the cytye of Brule : and in lyke wyse he sente into all the duchye of Orgoule to syr Clarembalt, that he sholde assemble al his hoste, and in al hast to come to him to the cytye of Brule. And whan al hys people were assembled together, thā Hector toke leue of the countesse, his mother in lawe, and of the fayre ladye Alise, hys wyfe, who desyred Gouvernar to recommaunde her to the gentyll Arthur.

Soo they departed fro Brule, and entred into theyr waye towarde

the Porte Noyre: and so long they rode, tyl at the last they were within two leges of the Porte Noyre, and than they entred into a great depe valey.

CAP. LXXXVIII.

HOW THAT HECTOR, AS HE WENT TOWARD THE PORTE NOYRE TO SOCoure ARTHUR, HE ENCOUNTRED ONE OF THE KYNGES THAT WAS COMMYNGE TOWARDE THEMPEROURE, AND HAD IN HIS COMPANY WEL VNT0 THE NOMBRE OF XVIII. THOUSANDE MEN OF WARRE; THE WHICHE KYNGE HECTOR SLEWE, AND ALL HIS PEOPLE: SO THAT THERE WAS NONE THAT EUER ESCAPED SAUYNGE TWOO, AND SOO THEY FLEDDE AWAY; AND THERE HECTOR WAS A GREAT BOTYE & MUCHE TREASURE, & GRET HABOUNDAUNCE OF VYTAYLE, THE WHYCH WAS AL BROUGHT INTO THE PORTE NOYRE.

THUS as Hector and his people were entred into thys greate valley, they perceyued where as there came to themwarde aboute the nombre of xviii. thousande men of warre. Than Hector demaūded of Gouvernar if that he knew them? And he answered, and sayd: Syr, nay, in good fayth: but I doubt me least they be of oure enemyes. Than Hector made al his host to be armed, and he him selfe and Gouvernar armed them.

And whan they were armed, Gouvernar presed forth, and demaunded one of them fro whence they were? And one of them answered, & sayde: Frende! it is Kyng Godyfer, who is goyng towarde the emperoure, to helpe him to lay siege to the Porte Noyre, to the entent to take it, and to slee a knight that is therin, who hath taken away Florēce, doughter to Kyng Emendus, the whych lady shold haue bene wedded to my lord themperour: wherfore there is none that is in that castel, or taketh part with

that knyght, but that the shal dye all a shameful death. What, said Gouvernar, thā thou doest threaten me, and yet thou callest me frende; but I shal quite y^e for thy labour, therefore defende thy selfe. Than Gouvernar drewe hys sworde, and strake soo the knyght betwene the sholders & the necke, that he claue hym downe to the waste; & than Gouvernar sayde: I trowe I haue assured this knyghte to be on our parte, for I thynke he wyl abyde here styll in thys place. Thā sayd Hector, I se wel that bytwene Gouvernar and this knyghte there was but lytel frendship. Than Hector behelde and saw where Kyng Godyfer dyd destyng hym selfe to come on Gouvernar as fast as he might; but Hector met him fyrst, and strake the kynge so rudelye, that he ouerthrew him wyde open in the feld: than Hector tourned him w^t hys sworde in hys hande to haue stryken of his head; but his people socoured him, and ran on Hector on all sydes: but Hector strake so among them, that he brake the gret prese. Than Gouvernar dashte into the thickest of the prese without sparyng of any body; for he cut of armes, legges, and hedes, grete plenty. Than syr Clarembalt entred into the prese, and syr Othes in like wise. Than there began suche a fray, that it was pitie to beholde. Than Kyng Godyfer was remounted agayne, and Hector layde on round about hym: and he went so muche forward, that he was closed in among hys enemies: how be it, he gaue amonge them so great strokes, that all y^t euer he attayned vnto wente to the deth: but his enemies dyd cast at hym knyues and daggers, so that at the last therbi they slewe his horse vnder him: than he lept on his fete with his swerde in his hand, but his enemies oppressed him gretely. Therwith Gouvernar came to hym all in a gret rage: & he was also at his comyng so beset with his enemies, that his horse was slayne vnder him; and than Hector & Gouvernar were in that case, y^t it was harde for them to escape: tyll at laste, syr Clarembalt & al his route came to them, and so than there began so sore a batayle, that it was wonder to beholde: and than Hector and Gouvernar dyd so valiantly, that eche of them gate hym a newe horse; and soo, in the spyte of all theyr enemyes, they were agayne remounted; and than they dasht into the prese, & gaue so myghty strokes, that

they confounded all that euer they attayned vnto. Than the Kyng Godyfer came on them with so greate a prese; that they drewe, by clene force, Gouvernar and syr Othes out of the prese, & closed them so rounde aboute, and gaue them so many grete strokes, y^t they slewe theyr horses vnder them; and than they defended them selfe as valiaunte knightes ought to do: and oftentimes they called for Hector to helpe to rescowe them; but the prese was so great and thycke, y^t Hector in no wise could get to them, and yet there he did maruailes with his handes, for he all to frusshed sheldes, and vnbarred helmes, and bet downe knightes: but Gouvernar & syr Othes were so ouer laden, that they were bothe taken prysoners, and ledde out of the batayle. Than Gouvernar sayde: A! dere mayster Arthur! to God I you commend: he that al thyng fourmed, kepe and saue thy noble bodye. But whan Hector knewe that they were taken prysoners, he was soo sore displeased, that nye he enraged for sorow, & soo habandoned hym selfe amonge hys enemies, & gaue so grete & heuy strokes, that euery man fled before hym, for he strake none but that they lost their lyues, or elles sore wounded.

And, in the meane season, Gouvernar and syr Othes wer ledde forth towarde themperour, who was comyng after: and as they were thus ledde forth, they mette with syr Brysebar and Clemenson, senesshal to Duke Phylp of Sabary: and Brysebar knew Gouvernar as soone as he sawe him. Than Brysebar escryed, & sayd: Saynt Mary! saue Arthur the good knight, for I se wel that Gouvernar is taken: therfore, gētle knight, helpe to socoure these two knyghtes, who are pertayninge to the gentyll Arthur. Than all his company set fyersly on them, and within a litle whyle they were all slayne and hewen in smal peces. And than Gouvernar & syr Othes were remoūted agayne: and they sayd to syr Brysebar: A! syr, for Goddes sake haste you as fast as ye can, for ye shal finde here before, in a grete valey, the noble Hector, cosin to Arthur, fighting with King Godifer, who hath with him a grete company: wherefore I fere me gretely, that this noble Duke Hector hath to moche in hande easely to escape. Saint Mary! sayd Clemenson, yonder I se them: Brysebar,

folowe me. Than they all togyder in a fronte wente togyder as faste as they might, & they were all well to the nombre of xx. thousande fyghting menne. Than Clemenson dasht in to the prese with his swerd in his hande: than he strake the fyrste that he encountred in suche wyse, that he made his heed to flye fro his sholdres: and syr Brisebar mette so with an other, that he claue his heed to his tethe: and they dyd so moche at theyr coming, that they two bette downe and slewe mo than xx. knyghtes. And whan Hector saw that, he said: Saint Mari! what knyghtes be these? or fro whens are they come? Than Gouvernar, who the same time came into the prese, answered Hector, and sayd: Syr, I trust that I haue done so moche, that ye shall haue noble socour. And whan Hector sawe Gouvernar, his herte reioysed, and said: Frende! helpe to socour yonder two knyghtes, for thei are worthy to haue helpe.

Than by that tyme al the hole company of xx. thousande was come in to the prese, and there they slew knyghtes grete plente, so that all Kynge Godyfers company were nye dyscomfyted. And whan the king saw that, he was soo sore dyspleased, that nye he was dead for anger: than he dasht his spores to his horse, and gaue Hector such a stroke, that he strake away of his shelde & harneys a grete quarter; but, as God wold, y^e stroke dyd not entre into the fleshe: and Hector strake the king soo rudely on the helme, that he claue his heed downe to the sholdres, and therwith he fell downe to the erth starke deed. And whan his people saw that, they tourned and fledde away; but Clemenson and Brisebar folowed in the chase, so that of xviii. thousand thei left on lyue but two persones.

Than Hector and Gouvernar came to Clemenson and Brisebar, and eche of them saluted other; and Hector thanked them of theyr good socour. Than they went all to the chariottes and cartes that Kyng Godyfer had brought thyder, wherin thei foude grete plente of golde and syluer, & grete plente of vitayle, the whyche Hector caused to be cōuaied to the Porte Noyre. Than Gouvernar sayd to Hector: Syr, I wyll goo before to my lorde Arthur, and shewe hym of your coming: and come you after faire and easely. Wel,

said Hector, go your way in the name of God. And so he departed, and wente to the Porte Noyre, & mouëd vp in to the palays : and there he founde Arthur, with Florence, & the bysshop, and mayster Steuen, & Duke Phylp.

And whan Arthur and Duke Philyp sawe Gouvernar, they sawe well by his harneys y^t he had ben in some bataile. Thā Arthur demaūded of hym what tidinges ? Sir, sayde he, ryght good, thanked be God ! Syr, beholde yonder cometh your cosin Hector and al his hoost, who hath discomfyted & slaine the Kynge Godyfer ; & of xviii. thousande that he brought with hym, there is left alyue but two persones : wyth the which king we met in a fayre valey, & he was comynge towarde the emperour to haue holpen him to haue destroyed you ; in the whiche fraye I was taken prisoner, and also the coūtesse of Brules senesshal, syr Othes ; but, thanked be God & Duke Phylp ! for his senesshal, the gentle Clemenson, and syr Brysebar, dyde rescowe & delyuer vs : soo now the Kynge Godyfer is slayne, & all his company : & Hector bryngeth with him grete plente of gold, & syluer, & vytayle, the whiche he wan in this bataile. I know well it mounteth to the nombre of ii.C. charyottes and cartes. A ! good Lord ! said Arthur, y^e vytayle is more welcome than golde or syluer. Than by y^t time Hector, Clemenson, & Brisebar, alyghted at the Porte Noyre, and lodged all their hoost about in the castel. Thā Arthur ran & embraced Hector al armed as he was, & sayd : Cosyn, ye be ryghte hertely welcome to the helping of the noble Florence here present. Truly, sayd Florence, blyssed be y^e neighbour y^t is redy to helpe at nede ! But, Arthur, howe is it y^t ye haue had suche a kynnesmā so nere vs & wold neuer shewe it to me ? Madame, quod Arthur, I did it for none yll entent. So thā Hector was led into a chambre to be vnarmed ; & Duke Philyp receyued Clemenson, & Brysebar, & syr Othes, w^t grete ioye. And whā Hector was vnarmed, than he went into the palays ; & Florēce behelde him, & liked hym wondersly, for she saw wel that he was bygge & well made. Than she sayd to Arthur : Syr, this gentylman semeth well to be of a redoubted lynage. Syr, quod the bishop, he semeth wel to be of the valure of a noble man.

Ye, syr, quod Hector, y^t I warraunt you, yf I wer at a table fayre couered w^t mete & drinke thereon. As God helpe me, said Duke Philip, he saith wel, for it were now tyme to ete some mete.

Thā squyers set vp tables : & in y^e meane time Florence & Arthur, Duke Philip & the archebyssshop, wēt & lent out at a window, and at last they sawe wher ther was coming Florence seneshal, & syr Perdicas, & xxx.M. in their cōpany of Florence retinue ; and thei al folowed y^e white baner of the realme of Blaūche Toure. Than Florence sayd to Arthur : Syr, beholde yonder cometh our folke y^t shal helpe our neighbours. Madame, quod Arthur, thei be wel come. Thā also they saw wher there came syr Miles, & syr Emery, & xv.M. in their cōpany. Than the fayre lady Margarete said : Madame, behold yonder cometh my cōpany, who are come to helpe you at al tymes. Margarete, my loue, I thanke you, quod Florēce, of your good ayde : & God giue me grace so lōg to liue, y^t I may deserue it vnto you. And whā Hector sawe so many stādardes & stremers coming, he said : As God helpe me, yf this were thēperour to this comīg, I wold thā haue trust soone to-se hym : &, by y^e good Lorde ! I shal se him as shortly as I can.

So thā these knyghtes dyd alight, and mounted vp in to the palays ; and Gouvernar & Brisebar apōynted euery man to his lodging ; and these knyghtes were receiued with grete ioye : and thei went to diner, & wer serued right rychely, with al maner of deyntees.

CAP. LXXXIX.

HOW THAT THEMPEROUR OF YNDE, & THE KYNG EMENDUS, ACCOMPANIED WITH VIII. KINGES, & WEL TO THE NOMBRE OF III. C.M. MEN OF WARRE, LAYDE SYEGE ABOUTE THE CASTELL OF THE PORTE NOYRE, WHER AS FLORENCE AND ARTHUR WERE: WHEROF YLL TOURNED TO THEMPEROUR, FOR THERE HE LOST THRE OF HYS KYNGES, AND WELL AN HONDRED THOUSANDE OF HIS MEN.

AFTER dyner, whā al the tables wer takē away, than Florence, & the bishop, & Arthur, went togyder & lened out at a window: and Duke Phylip, & the master, & Hector, lened out at an other window. Thā thei saw wher as the King of Mormall, & the Kyng of Ismaelyte, w^t al their powers, toke their lodging and pight their felde aboute the castel. And the King Emēdus was at Argence, abiding for the King of Valefoude and the King of Orqueney. And whā they were come to hym, than the Kyng Emendus made his own peas with them, and made theym a large amends in that he had before banysshed theym his courte, & sayd, how that he dyde it but in a haste, & than repented hym of his soo delynge. And whan they wer thus accorded, than they all togyder set forth in their way toward the Porte Noyre: & the two kinges went before; & the king, with the grete dragon of Sorolois, came in the rerewarde w^t al his hoost: so that al the coultre was ouerspradde with people. Now I se wel, said Arthur, that we shal haue warre: but, by the fayth that I owe vnto God, yf I may ones medle with theym, they shall not all retourne agayne. By the good Lorde! said Hector, thei lodge very nye vs, & yet thei be not our frēdes.

Than of thēperours company there came King Jonas, & after hym there came Kyng Clamados, & than after came themperour him selfe; & he was ryght sorowful whan he knewe of the deth of Kyng Godifer & of his cōpany, & how that al the tresour &

vitaile was taken into the Porte Noyre : & so the emperour was lodged on the left syde of the castel.

Than Florence said to the bisshop : Syr, how saye ye, is not yonder people sufficyēt to take a lady prysoner ? Certaynly, madame, quod Arthur, it is of trouthe they are gretely to be doubted. Syr, sayd Hector, let vs go to them, and gyue them theyr welcome. Verily, sayd the mayster, now shal be seen who is a noble man : veryly I am sone to a kyng, therfore ought I by reason to loue dedes of chyualry & to bere harneys ; therfore bycause of this mater I would fayn be made a knyght : & thā I wold gladly, syr Hector, go in your company to bydde yonder galauntes welcome, for I wold be loth y^t ye sholde go & I to tary behynde. And whan y^c byshop herde the mayster say y^t he wold be made a knyght, he had therat great laughter & sporte, and said : Mayster, by the good Lord ! it is moche better to be in a chābre with ladyes & damoysselles, than to be yonder without, & to abide the breking of sharpe speres : & it is hard to fynde a clerke to be a good knyght. Well, syr, said the mayster, all y^t maketh no mater : for I truste to do so well, y^t I shal brynge in one daye in to this place ii. of those kynges prysoners. Than thei all y^t herde him began to laugh : & so al y^t day they sported them at y^c maisters wordes tyl it was time to go to rest ; and than euery man wēt to bed, and toke their restes tyll the nexte morning. In the morning all these lordes arose betymes, and assembled them togyder in the middes of the palays. Thā Hector sayd to Arthur : Cosyn, yonder people without hath good lyste to slepe, for there is none to wake them ; by y^c good Lord me thynketh we be very slow ; let vs go to them and se how they do. In the name of God, quod syr Clemēsō, so let it be, for we do not our deuoyrs to abide so lōg : therfore let vs issu out & dele valiaūtly w^t thē. In the name of God, quod Arthur, euery mā to hārneis. And so euery man wēt to arme thē. Florēce was not at y^t poyntment ; but whan she knew therof, she came to them, and sayde : Syrs, what mene ye to do ? this mater must be done wysely, for ye know not preseisely as yet for what cause this grete assembly be come aboute this castell : peradventure thei be come to do honour to our

mariage bytwene Arthur and me; for I can not bileue that the king, my fader, be cam on me in harneys: wherfore, in my minde, it were not best to assayle them first; but, yf they assayle vs, thā let vs defende our selfe in the best wise we can. Syr Markes, ye are a noble mā to goo on my message to the kynge, my fader: wherfore I pray you go to hym, & humbly comaūde me to his grace, & say, y^t I requyre him to sende me worde of his minde, & why that he is come hyder in this maner of wyse at this tyme. I pray you marke wel these words that I haue sayd to you; a wyse man nedeth no teching: but & ye se that he wil nedes kepe styll hys frowarde mynde to me warde, thā I wyl that ye say to hys iiij. kynges & to al his chyualry, how that I sende them word how that thei be al my men & subiectes: wherfore, yf there be any of them so hardy to drawe ony swerde ayenst me or ayenst ony of myne, tell thē, that by the fayth that I owe to my lady Eglētyne, my dere moder, on whose soule Jhesu haue mercye! that I shall cause them to be hanged by the neckes, though that they bee neuer soo noble or gentil. And after that, I wyl ye enquiry why this emperour is come thus in to my realme: & yf ye se that he be come for our yll, & that he would haue batayle, shewe hym prysely that he shal haue bataile right sharpe and stronge to morow betymes, without ony longer delay. In the name of God, sayde Duke Philyp, I se well we haue a good heed of our hous. Madam, ye folow right wel the noble steppes of your lygnage. Wel, madame, said y^e Markes, I trust I shal so fulfyll your message y^t ye shall be content.

And so he toke his leue of Florence & of al the hole barony, & rode forth tyll he came before the King Emendus, at which time he was accompanied with his iiij. kynges: & also there was themperour, and all his kynges, and other dukes, erles, barons, and knightes: there was also the Kynge Jonas, and Kyng Clamados, and diuerse other noble men pertaining to themperour. Than the gentyll Markes entred in to the same place, & did salute the king and al his company, and sayd: Syr, I am come to you fro my ladye Florence, your doughter, the moost noble and gentyl lady liuing, who ryghte derely commendeth her vnto your grace, as to

her owne dere fader. And, syr, she is gretely abasshed of this grete company in harneys that ye haue brought hyder at thys tyme: for, syr, it is a grete abasshement to a noble gentyl mayden to se so many helmes & sheldes shyning ayenst the sonne: wherfore, syr, she requyreth you to know your pleasure & mynde. Than the kinge, with a fyerse loke, said: Syr knight, I wil not receyue her salutacyon, for I loue her not at my herte: but I hope to do her damage bothe of body & of goodes. Syr, said y^e Markes, & for what cause? Certainly, said the king, for she hath done me shame and despyte: for she hath gone awaye fro me with a straūge knyght, and she is come to hyde herself in this castel, & ther folyshely she kepeth company with this straunge knight; the which is a shame to her for euermore: & also she hath done me despyte, for I had gyuen her to this emperour to haue bene his wyfe, & she wyl not folow my wyl: and therfore, bicause of the shame that she hath done me, and dooth yet, lyke a false strūpet, I shall put her into a perpetuall prison, to thentente that she shall do me neuer more shame; & I shal hange the ribawde knight by the necke that caused her thus to do: for the despyte that she hathe done to me I shal do her an other, for I wyll neuer departe hens tyll I haue brought this castel downe to the harde earth. Thā the noble Markes answered, & said: Syr, as touching the shame that ye lay ayenst my lady for cominge into thys castell, I shall answere you. Syr, my lady is of great noblenesse & honour, and a quene, called by the ryghte of her moder: wherfore it is right y^t some tyme she go & se her owne coultre, and to take her pleasure of her own: &, syr, in that she departed without your lycence, was for fere and doubte of this emperour, to whome ye haue gyuen her ayenst her wil & herte; for she doubted lest that he wold haue had her ayenst her wyll: and therefore the mayster, by his clergy, made you to be abused at the church dore. And, syr, she came not hider so simply y^t she ought to be blamed, for she brought w^t her Duke Phylp, and tharchebyssshop, and wel v. hondred other knightes in her company; and, syr, the byshop is her vnclē & youre broder, wherfore he wold be as loth that she should do any otherwise than wel, as your selfe would be: but that

nedeth not to be fered; for she is of suche wysedome, that she cā rule her selfe wel ynough: for ther is not a wyser lady againe in al the world: & syr, also Duke Phylp hathe ben alwayes with her: & therefore suche people as be dayly with her, can reporte her deling; and so can not you that knoweth nothing therof; and yet ther is none that speketh ony vylany of her but you; y^e whiche thing, syr, me thinketh ye oughte not to do: and, syr, in dede yōder good knight Arthur is with her: & though it be so, that she hath retained him to her seruaunt, I thinke therin she hath done wysely: and so haue not ye done in lettīg him depart out of your courte; for he is the floure of al the chyualry of the world, & she, by her wysedome, hath retayned him; for whan he wente out of your courte, he lefte not his felaw behind him: and, syr, if she haue a good knyght retayned vnto her, she is not suche a lady, but that she is of suche habilitie that she may right wel guerdon hym for hys seruyce. Syr, she is not come to this castell in the despyte of you, nor yet for the loue of hym that ye so sore despyse: but, syr, she did it bycause y^t ye would gyue her to suche a man as she neuer loued, nor can not loue, nor wyll not loue, as longe as she lyueth, without it be by force: &, syr, she is not sō poore a lady, but that and ye wold giue her neuer so riche a man ayenst her wyl, yet ye may be sure there should neuer good lyfe be longe bytwene thē: & bicause that this emperour would haue her, & she loueth him not, therefore she is come to that most strōg castel that she hath, where as she careth neither for hym, nor yet for any other y^t wold do her any dyspleasure: therefore, syr, take hede what ye do; for ye know wel y^t ye wold haue her to do clene cōtrary to that was destenyed to her in the Moūt Perillous at her natiuyte: &, syr, a thyng predestynate is harde to be brokē: but, syr, I shal shew you what ye shal doo; fro hens forth leue medlyng ony ferder in this mater: for of one thing I make a warant, that ther is in her company & host a grete nombre of the best knyghtes of the world. Syr, leue this mater, and dele like a true king, and agre to y^t promesse that ye were before accorded vnto; & y^t was, who so euer shold haue the chaplet of the ymage, shoulde in lykewyse reioyse my lady Florence, your doughter: &

to this ye haue wryten your hande, & set to your seale: and in likewise hath done al your iiii. kynges here presēt, and all the xii. peres of your realme. Now, syr, ye do ayenst your owne seale & couenaunt that ye made lyke a kyng, thus to sende for your people in harneys to assēble ayenst a woman: the fader ayenst the doughter! it is vnnatural, & a gret shame! It is no dede of a kyng to doo ayenst his own couenaūt & promes. Syr, for Goddes sake forbere for doīg of any hurt ayenst your owne child, for ony singuler loue y^t ye haue to this emperour. Certainly, sayd the kyng, I wyll not forbere my minde; for all the tresour of the worlde shall not cause me: but y^t knight shal be hanged by the necke, & she put in to perpetuall pryson. Wel, syr, sayd the markes, than begin whan ye wil, & do the best ye can; perauēture all shal not be as ye wold haue it: but, neuerthelesse, to you iiii. kinges, & to al y^e xii. peres, & to al other knightes y^t be here present, I saye vnto you all, my lady Florence sendeth you word by me, y^t she meruayleth gretly y^t ye be come hyder in harneys to warre ayenst her, cōsidering that ye be all her subiectes, & she is your ryght lady & mastres: therfore, lordes! take good hede what ye do; for she straitly chargeth you, that ye nor none of yours drawe no swerde nor wepē ayenst her, nor none of hers: for and ye do, she promyseth, by the fayth y^t she oweth to my lady Eglentine, her dere mother y^t was, that there is none, of what degre so euer he be of, but that she wyl cause him to be hanged by the necke lyke a false traytoure: wherefore, syrs, by my counsail, take hede what ye do.

Than the Kyng of Orqueneŷ sayd to the Kyng Emendus: Syr, ye cause vs to haue grete maruayl y^t ye haue somoned vs to come hither in harneys to make warre agenst our natural lady, and to do agēst our promesses, writinges, and seales. Syr, it is of troth I am your man, and I ought to go with you whether so euer ye wyl haue me, in any iuste quarrell: but reason nor ryght wyl not that I sholde make war agenst our ryght ladye, whose subiectes & men we be and must be: for she is, & shal be, our lady by iust inheritaunce: but, by y^e fayth y^t I owe to God, and to my crowne of the realme of Orqueneŷ, neither I, nor none of mine, shal moue

any war agenst her. And of the same accord were al the iiii. kinges and xii. peres; for eche of theym sayd, that they wolde neuer bere harneys agenst their own lady, nor do agēst their own promesses made before. Than the Kinge Emendus sayd: Lordes! I can not tell what ye wyl do: but I promyse you all, that I wyl neuer depart out of this place tyl I haue destroyed this castel, and al the knightes y^t be therin hanged by the neckes. And they al aunswered him, and said: Syr, do as it pleseth you, and we shal gyue you the lokyng on: but we wyl not helpe therto, nor none of ours. Than the markes sayd to themperour: Syr, my lady wold fayn know why ye be thus entred into her realme with suche nūbre of men of war? Certaynly, syr, sayd themperoure, I am come hither to seke her as for mine owne, for she is giuen to me by her father, and because that she denieth my wil: therfore I am come hider to haue her, wheder she wyl or no; and I wyl do worse to her, than I wolde do to a false traytour: & I shal hang by the neck y^t rybaude knight that kepeth her at his plesure, and Duke Philyp of Sabary also, who doth sustaine her in her folysshe mynde.

And whan the Kyng of Orqueney herde themperour menase and threte, & say so of his neuewe, Duke Philyp, he sayde: Ye, syr emperoure, fayre and easely; for, or ye can bringe y^t about, ye shal haue no cap nor hat too put on your hed: for thoughe y^t she be giuē to you, yet she is not deliuered to you: ye mai wel muse on her delyueraunce; but I ensure you ye get her not so lyghtly as ye wene: and, syr, as for the knight whom ye do menase to hang by y^e necke; syr, it were a gret synne so to do, for his nourisshing coste hym more than soo: but, syr, take to morow some appointment betwene him & you, to do some dedes of armes togider, or elles take part of your men, & so shal he do of his, & than and ye cā take him, bind him fast, and than hang him by y^e necke, & thā shal ye be clene out of suspicion bitwene Florence and him, for thā ye may be sure he shal trespassse you no more: syr, loue hath broughte you hither; but ye, nor al your knights, are nothing worth, w^tout ye do some dedes to be praysed: sir, moūt on your horse to morowe, for loue gouerneth you: my lady is so fayre, and

she wolde gladly se you giue some fair stroke w^t your sworde for her loue; for alway good knightes getteth grace among fayre ladyes: therfore, syr, to morow wyn her amorous grace w^t some dede of chiualry, for in good faythe ye haue it not. Well, quod themperour, get me y^t knyght y^t sporteth hī so w^t her. Ye, syr, quod the markes, he wyl not so lyghtly be get; for, syr, he is within, and ye be w^tout in the rayne: and he is in the shadow abiding in the sighte of thys fayre ladi, y^e which is a gret shame to you: therfore put him out of this castell, & get your self in: but, syr, how say ye? shal this assēble be made to morowe or not? Bi my faith, said the emperour, I shal make him assemble to morow of iiii. thousand, and also of xviii. M. men of armes. Sir, said y^e markes, wil ye promise this faithfully? Ye truely, said thēperour. And I promyse faithfully for the other parti, said the markes, y^t ye shal be receiued. And than he spake as loud as he could, and said: Lordes & frēdes! suche as be subiectes to my lady Florence, y^t on payn of your liues y^t ye moue not nor make no war agēst my lady Florence, nor agenst none of hers. And than he said to thēperour: Syr, for Goddes sake begin the batail betymes, because of the hete. Than the King Clamedos said to y^e markes: Is this lady Florence so fayre as it is said? A! syr, said the markes, think ye nothing on her; for your emperour doth ynough for you bothe. Well, frende, sayd the kyng, I here say she hath wyth her a swete lytel rose, white, tender, & yong, who is called Floret. Syr, said the markes, indede there is suche one w^t my lady, and I ensure you she is righte swete; & she maketh oftentimes for me, and suche other knightes of my cōpany, goodly chaplets: and, sir, as yet to my knowledge she hath no loue nor paramount: and, syr, me think ye haue a iolly wanton eye; therfore, syr, come & se her to morow, for she shal be on the walles of the castel, & I shall shewe her vnto you if I cā mete w^t you: and, syr, when ye haue sene her, set your fete togyther, & assay if ye can lepe vp to her: take on you to morow this enterprise for thēperour. With a good wil, said he; and said to themperour: Syr, I require you let me haue the batail to morow. Well, quod thēperour, sith ye wil nedes, I am content: and so he toke his gloue





in pledge, and y^e king thanked hym. And the markes departed, & went to the castel, and recoūted to Florence and to Arthur word for word, as ye haue herde before. Than they answered, y^t they had of him a right good messenger, & graunted him the batail the next dai w^t xxx.M. agenst the Kyng Clamados.

CAP. XC.

HOW PHILIP, DUKE OF SABARY, & MASTER STEUEN, SON TO THE KING OF VALEFOUND, WER MADE KNIGHTES; AND OF THE DISCOMFITURE Y^t ARTHUR MADE ON THEMPEOUR.

AND whan Duke Philyp of Sabary herd how y^t they sholde haue a batayle the next day in the morninge, he sayde to the lady Florence: Madame, I requyre you let me be made a knight, for I may not be in the place where as so many noble men be, without I wer a knight. By the faith that I owe to God, sayd Florence, w^t a right good wil. Than maister Steuen stepte forth, and sayde: Madame, my lorde the archbisshop, here present, reputeth me but as one more metely to bete furies than knightes: but, madam, by the fayth that I owe to God, I wolde fayne be made a knyght, and thereof I requyre your grace: & than euery body began too laugh. Wel, syr, quod he, laugh not thereat, for I iape not: I wyl be made a knight and I may. Than he went to the ladye Margaret of Argenton, and said to her in her eare: Mine own dere lady! wil it not plesse you that I be made a knyghte? I beseche you gyue me leaue to be one. And she answered him fayre and softly in counsail, and said: Yes, ywys, swete loue! I wold be glad therof. Than he rose fro her, & sayd alowde: My lady Margarete of Argentō, how say ye, shal I be made a knight? Certainly, frende, quod she, I wold be glad thereof, on the condycyon that ye wil take armure & horse, and other abilemētes of

my gyft. Madam, sayd he, I thank you; and I shal be glad to folow your plesure, w^t the licence of my lady Florence. Certenly, quod Florence, I am content therw^t. And whā al y^e other lordes and knightes saw that the maister mened good faith, they were right glad therof; and so went as for that night to their restes. And in the morning, for Duke Philip, Florence prepared horse & harneys, and al other abilemētes; & fair lady Margaret ordeyned in like wise for maister Steuen: thā tharchbisshop sange y^e mass; and Arthur did gyrde on the maisters sword, and Hector did on Duke Philips: than Arthur and Clemēson led forth the master betwene thē, and Hector and syr Perdicas led forth Duke Philip: and so they offred to the bishop, and he didde giue them y^e neck strokes of knighthode, accordinge to the vsage y^t was than in y^t country. Than Arthur and Hector armed thē: and thā caused a gret horne to be blowen; and by the sowninge thereof, euerye knight went to their harnes; and thā thei toke their leues of Florence. And than Arthur said to the markes, and to syr Clarēbalt, and to syr Othes: Syrs, I pray you go and fortify the gates of this castel w^t iiii.C. pausses; and so they did. And thā they issued out of the castel in good ordinaūce, and Arthur ordeyned their bataile ryght strong and maruelous. In y^e first batayle there was him selfe, syr Brysebar, and sir Clemēson, and in their company vii.M. hawbertes; and they were comaunded to kepe their right way vnder the moūtayn: than folowed after thē, Hector, & Gouvernar, and Florence senesshal, w^t iiii.M. w^t them: and the master, and Duke Philyp, & syr Perdycas, went about the mountaine, to thentent to close round about themperyens, and they had with them viii.M.

Than thēperour, on his part, called hym the King Clamados, and said: Syr, go arme you and your mē, and go make assaut to the castel of the Port Noyre: and yf ye fortune to encoūtre the knight Arthur, loke y^t ye take him, and bring him aliue to me, for I wil make him be hanged so hie and so nere to the castle, y^t Florence may se hī euery day whan she wil. Syr, quod the king, doubt ye not, it shal be done: but it is an olde said sawe, he y^t reckoneth withoute his hoost must reken twise; and so dyd he,

for he fayled of hys enterprise. Than the king caused to be blowen a gret trumpè, & than eueri man ran to his harnes; and the King Clamados ordened iii. batails, and therle of thyle Perdue did lede y^e first batail, and the Duke of Calion w^t him, and they had in their cōpany x.M. men; and the second bataile was led by the Duke of Galace, and he had w^t hym x.M. men. And the Kinge Clamados him selfe led forthe the third bataile, & other x.M. with hym: and so they went forth with baners dysplayed, and toke the ryght way toward the castel, the whiche way Arthur was commyng towarde the felde; and so they wente forth so longe, tyl at last the Duke of Calyon and the erle of the Yle Perdue, who led the fyrst batayle, encountred Arthur, & Clemēson, and Brisebar, and their cōpany. Than Clemēson desired of Arthur to haue the first cours with his spere, and Arthur dyd graunte hym. Than he dasht his spores to his horse sydes, & ran at y^e Duke of Calyon, who came ayenst him, & they met so rudelye, y^t Clemenson strake so y^e duke, y^t his spere went clene throughout his body, and so the duke fel down to the erth. A Jesu! sayd Arthur, what ayde is thys at the first meting! Our enemyes hath by this dede a gret losse and discomforte. And whan therle of the Yle Perdue saw the duke dead, there arose in his host a gret and terrible cry, and they ran al at once on Clemensō, but he like a valiaunt knight defended him selfe w^t hys sworde, and gaue right gret and puissant strokes among them. Than there was none coude holde Brysebar, but he rusht into the prese, & the fyrst y^t he encountred wythal he bet downe to the earth; and the second neuer did crye after. Thā Arthur and his company came into the prese, and there bet downe and slewe knyghtes by greате hepes; and Arthur, with his good sword Clarēce, plunged in amonge his enemies, and bet down knyghtes and horses in suche wyse, that al fled before him, as they woulde haue fled fro the death, for there was none that abode hī, but that he receiued deth at his handes. And Clemenson stode styl and beheld him, and had gret wonder at his dedes; and as he stode lokīg on him, Arthur encountred so a knight, that he claue him to the teth. Than Clemenson toke of his dedes gret hardines on hym, and dasht into the thickest of the prese, & syr

Brisebar folowed him so far, that thei were enclosed rounde about with theyr enemies; and the prese was so great, that their horses were slaine vnder them, and so by greate force they were taken prysoners and led forth out of the feld toward themperor; but, as fortune wold, Hector met them: and as sone as he saw them, he spurred his hors w^t his sporres, & strake so the fyrst, that he claue him to the chyn; and fro the second he toke away his sholdre. Than Gouvernar toke his sword in his hande, and did helpe Hector to discomfyt them that led away the prysoners, & in the spyte of them all they were remoūted, and so returned again to the host. And Hector turned his horse and strake in the prese so rudely, that wyth the fyrst that he met he strake of his hed, and or he ceased he slewe x. eche after other: and at last Hector, Clemenson, Brysebar, & Gouvernar, met togyder; and betwene them they did such exsyse among themperours people, that al fled before them. Than therle of Galace came into the felde w^t x.M. in his cōpany: and than the batayl began to be so terrible, that there was many slayne and hurt of both parties. And whā Arthur saw so many emperiens assembled togider ayenst his men, he dasht to his hors w^t Clarence in his hand, & strake so rudely in y^e prese, y^t he cut of hedes, legges, armes, & hands, & vnbarred helmes, & claue asonder shelds, and cōfounded and bet down al y^t euer he touched; & at last he encountred therle of y^e Yle Perdue, but he thought he wolde not slee hym, but he strake him w^t the pomel of his good sword on hie on the helme so rudely, y^t he was so astonied w^t the stroke, y^t he wist not where he was, and so al in a traunce he fel on his hors neeke: and in the releuyng he strake at Hector, who as than had broken part of the prese to thentent to folowe Arthur; but Hector gaue hī suche a stroke, that he auoyded the sadel and fel to the erth. Thā Brisebar and Gouvernar toke him, & so he was sent into the castel to Florence like a prysoner. And whan the Duke of Galace saw that he had lost hym, he was right sorowful, and in gret rage dasht into the prese and met w^t syr Ansel, and gaue him such a stroke, that his sword went clene throughoute hys bodye; but yet, as God wold, he was not woūded to the deth, but he fel downe to the erth

in a gret traunce. Than Gouvernar toke and conuaied hī out of the prese, & sent him to the castell. And whan Florence saw her knight, sir Ansel, so sore wounded, she was right sorowful, and caused her surgiens to serch his woundes. And whan Arthur saw the stroke that the Duke of Galace had giuen syr Ansel, he was ryght sorowful, for he wende verely y^t he had bene dead: therw^t be broched to hys horse, & encoūtrede the duke w^t great malice, & gaue hym such a stroke, y^t he claue him to the sholders. And whan his people saw y^t he was slain, and that they had, as than, no capytaine, they were gretly abasshed, & tourned them to flie; but Arthur and Hector chased thē, til at last thei met with the King Clamedos & x. M. in his companye, and so they all dasht togider; & than there began a terryble batail; but the kinges company was so gret, that Arthur and his cōpanye had mucche to do to defend theyr lyues: tyl at last maister Steuen, & Duke Philip, & syr Perdykas, were come rounde aboute the mountain, so y^t they were at y^e hackes of theyr enemies; so y^t King Clamedos toke no hede therof, tyl they were on them vnware. And as soone as mayster Steuen saw y^e kinges host, he blewe suche a blast, that there arose a myst in the kings host, that they were so abasshed therwith, that they had thought to haue fled away: but than Duke Philip and the mayster rusht into the prese, and eche of them bet down him w^t whom they encountred: and there the maister did maruailes in armes. And at last Gouvernar saw him, and said to sir Clemenson: By the good Lord! syr, mayster Steuen, by semyng, hath gyuen vp hys mynde to be a priest; for I wene he wyll neuer synge masse: beholde yonder how valiaūtly he fyghteth! for there he sawe him giue right grete and valiant strokes. What shal I say more? So mucche dyd Arthur there, and his company, that y^e Kyng Clamedos and al his were clene discomfited, and fled away as fast as they myght to themperours tent, & recoūted to him al the losse that he had in that batail; and shewed him how that the Duke of Calion and the Duke of Galace were bothe slayne, and the erle of the Yle Perdue taken prisoner, & al his company slain: and said also, Syr, verely there was neuer seene suche a knyght as Arthur is; and he hath in his company of

the moste valyaunt knyghtes of all the worlde. And whan themperour herde al thys, he was so sorowfull and full of dyspleasure, that he was nere enraged out of his wytte: than he caused hornes and trompettes to be blowen, to thentent to cause his people to arme thē: and so themperour him selfe armed him, and also dyd Kyng Jonas, and xv. thousande in their company.

And whan Arthur herd that, he sayd to his people: Sirs, thanked be God, it is ryghte well happed to vs in the begynnyng of thys warre, and our people this day hath taken grete payne, wherfore they ought to be wery: wherfore, in my mynde, it were best that we draw our selfe agayn into our castel, and let vs se what this emperour wyl do to vs: wherto euery man was agreed: and so they withdrew thē, and mounted vp into the castel, and entred into the palais. Than Florence demaunded of Arthur how that he dyd? And he answered, and sayd: Dere lady! thanked be God, right wel. And in lyke wyse did the fayre lady Margarete to maister Steuen. Than the erle of y^e Yle Perdue came to Arthur, who receyued him right swetely, and said: Syr, be of good chere, and be not dismayed; for ye shall haue here but a good pryson: and the erle thanked him right swetely.

CAP. XCI.

HOVE THAT THEMPEROUR SPAKE WYTH QUENE PROSERPINE,
WENYNG TO HYM THAT IT HAD BENE THE FAYRE LADYE
FLORENCE, BUT HE WAS DECEYUED; FOR SHE DYD SET A
GREATE DYSCORDE BETWENE HIM AND THE KING EMENDUS,
AS YE SHAL HERE AFTER.

WHAN y^e themperour & his cōpany wer redy aparailed, thei lept on their horses & folowed after Arthur w^t xl. thousand in his cōpany. And whan he came nere to y^e castel, he beheld y^e

situacion therof a gret season; and at the last he sawe the Quene Proserpine and a damōsel w^t her, issuing out of the castel: and he thought verely y^t it had ben Florence that had ben fled out of the castel: and with that sight he clene forgate his displeasure, and all the losse y^t he had in the battayle before: and so he dasht to his horse, and a xxx. persons w^t him. And whā he had ouertaken her, and sene her perfytely in the face, he sayde to hym selfe, Verely thys same is Florence! and so than he forgat al maner of other thinges, and layd his handes on y^e raine of her horse, & sayd: Fayre damosell! whether are ye goyng so fast thys way? Certaynly, syr, said she, it hath bē shewed me, that ye and the king, my father, are ryght sore dyspleased w^t me; but, syr, it greueth me more your displeasure than mi father: wherfore, syr, I thinke to go to an abbey here by, and there to be made a nonne for youre dyspleasure all onely. Damoyzell, sayd themperour, if it please you, we two shall be soone agreed. Syr, sayde she, I thanke you; but howe shall that be? wyl ye haue me to youre wife, & I you to my husbond? Ye truly, said themperour. Syr, said she, I am content therewith; but how shal I do, for the kyng, my father, wyl sle me if he maye haue me vnder his rule? &, syr, by the fayth y^t I owe ynto oure Lorde, my body was neuer defouled with yonder knight Arthur, nor yet w^t any other. Well, fayre lady! sayd themperour, and yf that be of trouth, I ensure you youre father shall do you no hurte, but my parte shal be therein. Syr, sayd she, may I trust on this? for it sore forthinketh me y^t euer I dyd any dysplesure to you. Ye truely, said themperour, think not the contrary: therfore now be in peace. And so themperour toke her w^t him into hys tente, and cleped and kissed her oftentimes: y^t at the last it came to the heryng of King Emendus, how that themperour had a gret batail with them of the castel, and how that he had lost al his people that he had sent thider. Than he armed him, and wel to the nūbre of xxx. thousand, and came to the emperours tent to comforte hym of hys losse: than it was shewed to themperour, how that the kyng was comyng towarde him. He shal be welcome, sayd themperour. A! syr, sayd Proserpine, I am now vnder your kepynge; for Goddes sake, let

my fader do me no vilany! Be not a frayde, for I warrant you, sayde themperoure.

Than the king entred into the paulyon; and as soone as he sawe Proserpyne, he wende verely it had be Florence, his doughter, & sayd: What, thou strumpet! art yⁿ now here? where is that rybaud knight Arthur, that hath kept the thus long? is he nowe become thy sauegard? I trowe now thou wenest to make thy peace: but, by the fayth that I owe vnto the crown of Sorolois, thou shalt neuer escape out of pryson as longe as I lyue: thou shalt do me no more shame, nowe that I haue the. Syr, said themperour, for Goddes sake be not soo sore displeased, for she hath done no trespase; & if she haue, I forgyue it her for euer: and, syr, so shal ye do for y^e loue of mee. And, Florence, I requyre you knele downe before your father, and cry him mercy. Syr, said she, w^t a right good wyll. Than she kneled downe before her fader, & sayd: Gentyl king, and dere fader! haue mercy on me, & forgyue me your yl wyl. And the kynge, who was styl ful of feruent yre and despyte, lyfte vp hys fote and strake her therwith in the middes of the brest, & so ouerthrewe her wyde open to the erth. And whan themperour sawe that, he was ryght sore displeased, & sayd: Syr kynge, ye haue done me grete vilany; for I had assured her, that she shold haue had no hurte, neyther of you, nor of none other; & she is in my paulyon and in my keping; and she is myne, and yet ye bete her here before my face. Well, syr emperour, said the king, in an yll houre she is aryued here; for, whether ye wyll or not, she shall be cast in to perpetuall pryson. Than the kinge toke her by the arme, and drewe her to hymwarde, to thentent to haue ledde her forthe out of the tent; but themperour toke her in his armes, & said: Syr kynge, holde you styll; or, by the fayth that I owe to myn empyre, yf ye set handes on her ony more, ye and I shal be enemyes togyder for euermore. Than was the kynge more displeased than he was before, and lyft vp his hande, & gaue her a grete blow or two vnder the cheke as she stode in themperours armes. Than themperour sayd: What! stryke ye her for all my praier, and betwene mine armes in my keping! By the faythe

that I owe vnto God, it sore greueth me; & therwith he toke his swerde in his hande, & gaue the king a puissaunt stroke. Than the kyng drew his swerde, & gaue agayne themperour a grete stroke: than the kynges company assayled themperour, and themperyeence ran on the king; and so ther were well to the nombre of xxx. thousande on bothe parties. Than there began amonge them a grete battaile & a fyerse, so y^t ther were many slayne and hurt. And amonge them ther was such a noyse, that Arthur and his company might well here them as they were in the castel; & they went to the wyndowes and looked out at theym, to know what noyse that was, and ther they sawe a fyerse bataile without in the felde amonge theyr enemyes: & they sent out a spye to knowe the trouthe what it myght be; & he went and came again, and reported to Florence, & to them all, how it was, and for what occasyon the batayle was bytwene the kyng & themperour. Neuer trust me, said Florence, but y^t Proserpyne is in themperours tent, and they wene all how that I were there amonge them; for I remembre well she sayd ones to me, and to Arthur also, how y^t she wold cause as moche hate & stryfe to be amōg them, as euer was loue. Verely, madame, said Arthur, ye say very trouth, for I am wel remembred so I herde her ones say. And euer this bataile encreased more & more, for the people drewe to on bothe parties: the whiche had tourned to grete damage on both partyes, yf the .iiii. kynges had not ben; for they did so moche, that with grete payne and ieopardy they departed theym; and than sodeynly Proserpine was vanysshed away, soo that none wist where she was become.

And as soone as euery man was vnarmed, themperour departed and went his waye toward his owne countre: and his people comforted hym to the best of theyr power. And the kyng was in his tent, and trembled for yre. And therwith there came to hym one of the emperours dukes, and sayd: Syr, my lorde themperour quyteth you of the gift of Florence, youre doughter; for he careth neyther for you, nor for her, nor for none of your loues, nor for nothing that ye haue or shall haue; and by me he defyeth you, and biddeth you to be ware of hym at this nexte Eester; for than

he wyll come and make war ayenst you with an hondred thousande men of warre. Than the King of Orqueney sayd : Syr, say vnto your emperour, that yf he come he shall fynde that wyll speke with hym not to his pleasure ; & I ensure you, yf he come not, he shal be sought where so euer he be, to thentēt to haue his heed brought into this cowntre : therfore shewe hym, that yf he wil come and brīg him self into this realme, he shall ease vs of moche payne.

Than the duke departed, and the Kynge Emendus abode styl in grete malencoly. Than the King of Valefoūde said to him : Syr, here is begon a great besynes, & many inconueniētes are lyke to folow therby : therfore, syr, it shal be nedeful for you to puruey for people, & for the best knyghtes that ye can gete ; for themperour is a puissaunt prince, & hathe many frendes. Gentle kynge ! suffre your selfe to be cōseyled both to your profyt & honour : syr, for Goddes sake leue this abusiō thus to lay syege to your doughter, & do no more ayenst your owne promesse & agreement, nor striue no more ayēst your doughters desteny ; for there is no profyte can come to you therby, but many yll inconuenyences may ensue therby, & hath done all redy, as it hath appered by the Duke of Bigor, for he hath receyued deth ; &, syr, ye wer in grete displeasure with the King of Orqueney & with me, & banished vs out of your courte ; also, syr, ye were in grete abusyon at Cornyte at y^e chirch dore, whan ye wēde to haue married Florence to themperour, & now ye be fallē w^t him at grete mortall warre. And, syr, this emperour hath lost a king, & ii. dukes, & all theyr people slayne : and all this is done bicause ye be obstinate ayenst Florēce desteny : therfore now, syr, do yet the best : appease your selfe & make peas with your doughter, & w^t the good knyght Arthur, & desyre hym to aide you ayenst this emperour ; for one thyng I say, y^t he hath in his cōpany many of the best knyghtes of al the world : &, syr, if ye may haue them, ye nede not to fere thēperour, nor yet all the world. Syr, I cōseyle you thus to do. Ye, said the king, & wold ye haue me to do thus ? how shold I than haue ony honour or fame in this worlde, syth she shamefully hath forsakē me, & is gone away w^t this straūge knight ? Well,

syr, quod the Kīg of Valefoūd, your doughter, I ensure you, right sagely behaueth her self, as she that nothīg wyl do ayenst her desteny; & bycause ye wold haue constrayned her to haue maryed ayenst her wyl, therfore she is come in to this strōge castell for to withstād this emperour. Syr, she hath with her your own broder, tharchebyshop, & her cosyn, Duke Philyp of Sabary, & v.C. of her knightes; &, syr, ther is none of all these, that for all the good in the world thei wold not suffre ony incōuenientes bitwene her & this knight Arthur: but, syr, she fereth y^t this emperour wold doo her damage; therfore she hath retayned hym, & suche other as be of hys cōpany, bycause that he is the moost best knyght of all the worlde now lyuyng: wherin, syr, she hath done wysely; for ye may se how at all poyntes thei haue displeased this emperour, and slayne of hys men. Syr, your doughter is your owne, & this emperour is now your mortall enemy: but, syr, your loue ought for to be on your doughter, & bere you fyersly ayenst your enemyes, and not ayenst her whom ye should loue. Than the kyng sayd: Syr, by the good Lord! I am, at this presēt time, so ouercome wyth dyspleasure, that I can not as now receyue your wordes in gree: I shall aduyse me well this night, & to morowe I shall answere you. Syr, ye saye well, sayd the kynges and xii. peres.

Than the kyng was vnarmed, & al other in lyke wyse: than the tables were spred, and euery man sate downe & made good chere; and so passed forth the time w^t the kyng, tyll it was tyme to go to rest.

CAP. XCII.

HOW THAT AFTER THEMPEOUR WAS THUS DEPARTED IN DYS-
PLEASURE, AND HAD DEFYED THE KYNG WYTH MORTALL
WARRE, THE NEXTE NYGHT FOLOWYNGE, BY THE SUBTYLL
ARTE OF MAISTER STEUEN, AL THE KINGES HOST WAS BROUGHT
EUEY MAN FAST A SLEPE; & IN THE MEANE TYME, THE MAY-
STER, AND FYUE OTHER KNYGHTES WITH HYM, BARE THE KING
EMENDUS FAST A SLEPE AS HE LAYE, BEDDE AND ALL, VP IN TO
THE PALAYS OF THE CASTELL OF THE PORTE NOYRE.

THUS as the Kyng Emendus and hys lordes were in theyr tentes
ryghte sore troubled & abashed of the debate y^t was rysen bytwene
the kyng and themperour for the loue of Proserpyne, as ye haue
herde here before, all that season Arthur and his company were
in the castell laughynge and hauing good game of the begynning
of the occasyon of the stryfe bytwene the kinge and the emperour;
and so all that day thei were in grete feest and ioye, tyl it was
time to go to theyr restes: and so euery man wente therto saue
the mayster, & he was in hys doublet, bycause that the weder
was somewhat hote; & in his company there was Duke Phylp,
Brysebar, Gouvernar, Hector, and Clemenson, and Perdycas; and
they played and sported them togider til it was very late. Than
Gouvernar sayd to the mayster: Syr, yonder in the heuen ye may
se many sterres: but, I pray you, how can ye know by them what
shold fal after? Syr, said the maister, y^e scyence therof is right
pleasaunt and goodly. I praye you, maister, said Hector, loke
now vp in to the heuen & beholde the planettes, and loke & ye can
perceyue ony thinge that should auaūtage or elles be hurteful to
vs. And soo, for their pleasure, the mayster loked vp & beheld
y^e heuen a grete space; & at last he sayd: Lordes & frendes! and
ye behelde the planettes & coude cōsyder them as well as I do, ye
shold clerely perceiue that we be at thende of our war; for we shal
haue shortly peas; &, as I thinke, veryly we shall haue Arthur to

our lorde & mayster. Swete mayster, said Duke Phylp, & I pray you, how shal al this come to passe? Veryly, syr, I se well by y^e course of the sterres many meruayles: for y^e planet that as now rēneth, who hath the gouernaunce ouer the Kynge Emendus, is now in that poynt, y^t yf we mighte haue the kynge, we shold lightly haue peace w^t hym; & I knowe well, by the planet, that he is as now layde in his bedde in his paulyon, and is fast a slepe, & all hys hoost; and I knowe suche a charme, that yf I do cast it, neither he, nor none of his, shal awake tyll it be to morowe fayre daye: therefore let vs go out in to the felde and bring hyther the kynge, and than shall we haue our peas sone made. In y^e name of God, said Brisebar, shame haue he that fayleth so to do. Let vs go streight waye, sayd Gouvernar. Than they all aparayled them, and went out of the castell as pryuely as they coude, and desyred the markes to kepe the gates open tyll they retourned. And whan they approached nere to the tentes, than the maister blew such a blast, that ther arose a grete storme and a thicke myste, so that they loost clene the sight of the tentes, and therwith euery man that was waking in the felde fell fast a slepe. Than the mayster and his cōpany went to the kynges tent, and there they founde hym in hys riall bedde fast a slepe, & grete lyghtes of waxe brenning before hym. And so amonge them they toke the hole bedde and the kyng lyenge in it, and bare it fayre and softly vp to the castell, and dyde set downe the bedde in the grete hall of the palays, and so set foure torches of waxe brenning before hym, and soo they dyde let hym lye styll.

Than the mayster sayd: I wyll retourne agayn to the tentes and awake the king, my fader, and shewe hym howe that we haue the king within the castel with vs. And so he went into his faders tent, and vndyde his enchauntement, and so than he was brought vnto his faders beddes syde; and than he sate hym downe fayre and softly, and abode tyll the kynge, his fader, awoke by hym selfe. And than the mayster sayd: Syr, be ye a slepe? Nay, sayd the kynge, who be ye that speketh to me thus erly? Syr, I am Steuen, your sone. Sainct Mary! sayd the kynge, who hath brought you hyder? gete you hens, for & Kyng Emendus may

take you, ther is no gold nor syluer that shal saue you fro y^e deth. Syr, sayd the mayster, the kynge is as now more in my daunger than I am in his; for, syr, he is in y^e castel fast a slepe. A slepe in the castell! sayd the kynge, how can y^e be? how is he come thyder? or how should he be a slepe among his enemyes? Syr, truly we haue this night borne him to the castell in his bedde fast a slepe; for, syr, by the subtyll arte of nygromancy, I brought hym & all his hoost fast a slepe; therfore, syr, I am com to you for to haue your counseyle what we shall do wth him, eyther slee him or saue him on liue. Slee hym! said the kinge: Saint Mary! loke that ye touche hym not to his hurte, but honour ye hym as moche as ye may: abyde ye here a lytell space, & I wyl aryse & go speke with the Kinge of Orqueney. And as soone as he was redy, they went bothe togyder to the Kynge of Orqueney, who was as than fast a slepe in his tent. Than they awoke him, & recoūted to hym al the mater. Than the King of Valefoūde sayd: Syr, for Goddes sake helpe to make y^e peas amōnge vs. Than the king said: Syrs, I thinke it wer best to go and wake al the other kinges, and xii. peres, and let them come hyder: and so they were incontīnēt sente for, and they came thyder streyght wayes. And as soone as they were come, and herde all the case how it was, than the Kinge of Valefounde said: Syrs, let vs euery man set to our handes to make the peas, for as now we are nere at the point: let vs go all to the castel, and saye to the kyng, how that al we were borne in lyke wyse as he was vp in to the castell whiles that we were a slepe: and than whan he seeth and hereth that we all be taken prysoners, and that he hath none now in all his host that is able to mayntain his warre, he wyl the sooner be cōuerted and broken fro his purpose. And they all answered, and sayd: Syr, ye haue ryght well deuysed the mater; we be al cōtent thus to do. Than they all departed pryuely, that none of the hoost espyed them, and went vp into the castell; & so there they wente to theyr beddes, and laye styl tyll it was in the mornynge. Than in the mornynge betymes, the mayster and Hector wente to Arthur and awoke hym, and sayd: Syr, ye haue here in your company the Kynge Emendus, and al the other foure kinges, and the xii. peres.

And where are they? sayd Arthur. Here wⁱⁿ this fayre chambre, sayd Hector. A! gentyll mayster! sayde Arthur, blessed be the houre that euer ye were borne; for now I trust we shal haue peas: let vs go cause Florence and the archebyssshop to aryse: and so they dyde. And whan they were vp and redy, & herde these tydynges, they were ryght ioyfull. Than tharchebyssshop sayd: Let vs go and cause to aryse the Kyng of Valefounde, and the King of Orqueney, and the Kyng of Ismaelyte, and the King of Mormall, & al the xii. peres; & than let vs take cōseyle togyder, & se what shall be done ferder in this mater. And Duke Phylp wente for them; and as soone as thei wer come, they saluted Arthur and Florence. Than the byssshop sayd: Syrs, now there is noo more to do, but let euery man take theyr harneys. Than Arthur, Duke Phylp, Hector, & Gouvernar, armed them, & two C. other knyghtes in theyr company. Than the byssshop sayd: Syrs, now shal the King Emēdus doubte whā he seeth you; & the sooner he wyl agre to make peas w^t you. Than the Kyng of Valefounde said: Faire lady Florence! ye shal go to the king your faders bedde, & wake him. Alas! said Florence, shal I go to him, & he hateth me deedly? I fere me he wyll slee me. Madame, quod the Kyng of Mormal, there is not so harde a herted mā but y^t a woman shal molyfy hym; for there was neuer so grete wrath, but a womā may appease it: therfore, madame, go your way to him, for I waraūt you ye shall make your peas youre selfe. Well, quod Florēce, I shal go to him; God be my helpe.

Thā she departed & wēt softly into the chambre wher as the king her fader laye. Than she opened y^e windowes, & dyd out the lyghtes of waxe, and went fayre & softly to the kinges beddes syde; and whan she saw that he slept fast, she sate her down by him on the beddes fete.

CAP. XCIII.

HOW THAT KYNGE EMENDUS, WHAN THAT HE AWOKE, FORGAUE
ALL HIS YLL WYL TO FLORENCE HIS DOUGHTER; AND DYDE PUT
ALL THE GOVERNYNGE OF HIS REALME INTO HER HANDES.

THUS as Florence sate on her faders beddes fete a good space, at laste the kinge felte one syttyng on hys beddes fete; therwith he awoke & opened his eyen, & behelde the grete wyndowes open before hym, fayre glased, & the sone shynynge all about the chambre, the whiche was hanged ryght rychely. Than the kyng meruayled gretely wher he was, and was sore afrayed, and blessed him oftentymes, and sayd: Saynt Marye! where am I? what! am I betrayed? what arte thou that syttest on my beddes fete? Syr, sayd she, I am your doughter Florēce. And whan the king perceiued that it was she, he sayd: Who hath brought the in to thys place wher as I am, syth thou haste shamed thy selfe with a fugityue knyght? A! syr, sayd Florence, for Goddes sake saye ye so no more: for, by the holy baptism that I receyued at the fonte stone, & on the dampnacion of my soule, my body was neuer by hym, nor by none other, enpayred, neyther in word nor in dede. Certaynly, said the kyng, fole as thou arte, I byleue the not: why hast thou elles ben so moche in his cōpany without doying of any other thing? for loke, where as the hert is, there is the body habandoned, for the body enclyneth to the herte. Why, sayde Florence, it nedeth not alwayes to accomplyshe al the wylles of the herte, but suche as are honourable & good. A! sayd the king, what honour is this for you thus to hold your selfe in pryson, priuely hydde with a straunge knyght, & to leue such a noble maryage as I would haue gyuen to you? Syr, sayd she, yf it please you, I shal shew you as to that I haue left you and come hyder. It is of trouth I sawe wel ye wer of the mynde to haue gyuen me in mariage to this emperour, the whiche truely was ayenst my mynde; for I hate him to the death; in so moche,

that I woulde it had cost me the one halfe of my londes so that I had his heed fro his sholdres, soo that I should not offende God. And, syr, in this grete haterede yf I should haue taken hym, my hert should neuer haue ben in peace til I had caused him perauēture to haue lost his lyfe, & therby shoulde I haue ben reputed a false murtherer, & dāpned my soule perpetually: & to you this shold haue ben a grete shame & reproche; for I am sure, yf I shold haue died in the quarell, I should haue sayd gramercy to hym y^t would haue brought me his heed; for I am in fere I shold haue put my soule in ieopardy to haue gone to the deuyl of hell, and as fynding in some maner of wayes to haue shorted his mortal lyfe, & so in this I should haue becom cruel, and lost my womans herte. Syr, I ensure you this was my wyl and entencion. And, syr, to eschewe al these perylles & inconuenyentes I am come hyder: for I know well that yf I had taryed wyth you, ye wolde haue caused me to haue had hym ayenst my wyll; therfore I durste not dyscouer my courage vnto you; but I shewed my mynde to your broder, the noble archebisshop, who is myne vncle & fader in God, & confessor: he hath all thys season taken hede to me, both coming and going, in chambre and out of chambre; therfore enquire of him, & of Duke Philyp of Sabary, and of all my other barons & knightes, ladyes & damoysselles, wheder than I haue dyshonestly ordred my selfe or not: &, syr, as for the knight that ye speke of, I haue none otherwysē done w^t hym but as my desteny hath gyuen me. And, syr, thus hathe ben al my deling: therfore, syr, for Goddes sake haue pyte on me your owne humble chylde! Ye be my lord and fader, & I am your doughter: ye are left vnto me in the stede of my moder, who I am sure, and she had lyued, wold haue endured grete trouble rather than I shold haue ben maryed ayenst my wil & desteny: &, syr, syth ye are lefte me in the stede of my moder, for Goddes sake than leue your faderly herte and take a moderly herte vnto you! Syr, accomplysse my desyre, & let neuer this emperour haue me. I loue you, & doubt you as I ought to do, my dere fader: wherefore, syr, open your hert, and take pyte on your child. And therwith she began rufully to wepe, so y^t grete plente of syluer droppes fell downe on her

brestes. And whan the kynge sawe her, & herde her speke so humbly, his herte coude no lenger endure in y^t rygour, but it began to melte, & said: Wel, doughter Florence, appease your self, and wepe no more; I shal speke of this mater with my counseyle. Wher is Guylliā, my chāberlayne? cause him to come to me, for I wyl ryse. Sir, quod she, he is w^tout in y^e felde in your tent. Saynt Mary! sayd the kyng, & how am I thā brought into this place? Certaynly, syr, ye we brought hider ryght softly for fere of waking of you: & in lyke wise so be al your iiij. kinges and xii. peres, for they knew nothyng therof tyl they awoke this mornyng. Veryly, quod the king, thys was wondersly well slepte of vs all: gyue me my doublet, and I wyll ryse. Than Florēce gaue it hym, and laced his sleues, & toke a keruerchefe & did cast it about his sholdres, & toke a combe and ryght softly dyde kembe his heed, the whiche ryght wel pleased the kyng; & so she made hym redy at al poyntes.

And thā he yssued out of the chambre, and led Florence by the hand, who made somewhat semblaūt to be sorowful. And whan they wer entred into this palays, the kyng saw al his other iiij. kinges and xii. peres. Than he smiled a lytel, & said: Lordes, the lady of thys place hath made better warre than any of vs hath done, for we are now more in her daūger than she is in ours. Thā the Kyng of Mormal sayde: Syr, than it is nedeful to vs y^t we take good hede y^t we displese her not. Well, sayde the kyng, but were all we brought hyther w^tout knowlege of our people in the field: by the faith that I owe to God, I haue wonder howe it myght be. And therwith they hearde a gret cry and clamor without in the felde among his people, and the king maruayled what it might be. Verely, syr, sayd the Kyng of Orqueney, I beleue it be for you and for vs, because they know not where we are become. For Goddes sake, sayd the kyng, sende worde out to theym, and shew how that I commaund them to be in peace. And so incontynent there was a messenger sent to them. Than the Kyng of Mormall sayd vnto Florence: Madam, I requyre you depart out of this chambre for a season, for we wyl speake wyth the king in counsayle. Than she departed.

Than the Kyng of Mormall sayd : Syr, before ye came to vs we were speakyng of you, and I shal tel you what it was. Syr, it is of trouth that ye know wel the desteny of Florence, your doughter, that who so euer take her in maryage, wythout it be he to whom that she is destenyed vnto, shal not escape without deth, as it appereth playnely by this emperoure : for I beleue verely, that yf he enforce him selfe any ferder to haue her, it wyll coste hym his lyfe. And, syr, ye dyd se howe that the ymage dyd gyue her chaplet vntoo thys knyght Arthur, who is aboue all other most chyefe in chyualry ; and, syr, ye dydde seale and swere to kepe the appointment that was made, and in lyke wyse dyde we al your kyngs, and xii. peres : therfore, syr, it is our mynde and counsayl that ye accomplysse your promyse, whereto ye haue set your wrytyng and great seale. And, syr, do ye so that ye may haue the accord and good wil of this knight Arthur, the whiche shal be right nedeful for you for the sustaynyng of your warre : &, syr, al we be of thys accord. Why, syrs, sayde the kyng, and wyl ye haue me too gyue my doughter and heyre vnto a straunge knyght, and we know nothyng of hys gentylnes or parage, for he may be of suche lignage that it shold be great vylany to me and to al my relme to gyue her vnto hym, and al ye that counsail me therto shold be greatly blamed. Than the Kyng of Valefound sayd : Syr, a man oughte not to demaunde for good wyne where as it groweth, nor a wyse valyaunt man fro whence he cometh : we se and knowe wel the hye surmountyng beauty of hys bodye ; for, syr, in all your realme there is not a goodlyer man at all poyntes : and also we may se his great gentylnes, how that he giueth all aboute vnto knyghtes, horses, and harnes, robes, and golde and syluer gret plentye ; and he is endued aboue al other wyth thys noble vertue of lyberalytye : and, syr, the sweetenes and grace that is in hym can not be recounted, and the redoubted chyualrye that is in hym is incomparable : syr, yf there were noo thynges elles in hym, it were suffycyente ynough for hym to attayne thereby vnto gret excellent honoure and noble dygnytye : howe be it, syr, send for hys cosin Hector, who is here wythin thys place, and also for Gouvernar, who is a righte sage knight : and let vs take

their promesse to tel vs the troth, where that Arthur was born, and of what lignage he is come; for paraduventure we shal soner know it by them than by him selfe, for I am sure he wyl not praise him selfe; for I neuer saw so good a knight and so lytel auaunture. Than they sayd all w^t one voyce: Sir, this kyng sayeth well.

Than they sent for Hector & Gouvernar. And whan the King Emēdus saw Hector, who was byg, and gret, and wel furnisshed in al his mēbres, and holdyng hys hand on the pomell of hys sword, and loked fiersly, than the kyng sayd: Thys knight is to be redoubted, I wot not what he is. Thā they answered, & said: Syr, themperours people knoweth ryght wel to whom he belongeth: syr, surely Arthur & he calleth eche other cosyns. Than the king called them to him, & sayd: Lordes, we haue sent to speke w^t you: ye be both fayre persons, and haue right great semblant to be wise, and so we beleue verely y^t ye be; yet neuertheles we wyl haue youre promes that ye shal shewe vs the trouth of that thyng y^t we wil demaund of you, and that, for loue or promes, losse or winning, to you or to ani other that ye haue, shal shewe nothyng to vs but the trouth of our demaunde. Certaynlye, syr, we faythfully promyse you to shew you ony thing that we can do, so y^t it tourne to no vylany to vs, nor to our lord & mayster. Well, syr, sayd the kyng, I praye you who is your lord and master? Syr, as God helpe me, Arthur is our lord. And what holde you of hym? sayd the kinge. Verely, syr, saide Hector, a duchy & an erledome I hold of hym. That is a great thing, sayd the king. And ye, syr Gouvernar, what hold you of him? As God helpe me, syr, all that euer I haue in this worlde. Than he is a great man, sayd the kyng. Ye, syr, truly, said Hector, that he is. And of whom was he borne, sayd the kyng, and of what coutry, and of what lygnage? As touchyng that, ye shal pardon vs, for that wyll we not shewe you without his lycence.

Than Arthur was sente for; and as soone as the kyng sawe hym al hys dyspleasure passed away. Than the kinge desyred him so hertely, that at the last he gaue lycence to Hector and to Gouvernar to shew the kyng what he was. Than Hector sayd: Syr, by the assuraunce and promesse that I haue made to you, I shal shew you





Let. 17. 1. 1. 1.

the trouth, now that he hath gyuen me lycence. Syr, thys knyght Arthur is the al onely son to my lorde the noble Duke of Brytayne, and neuewe to the Erle of Bloys, and of the lygnage of the Duke of Lancastre in England. By my promes, sayd Gouvernar, al that Hector hath sayd is of a trouth. In the name of God, sayde the kyng, than he is of a suffycyente gentyl lygnage; howe saye ye, my kynges and peres? As God helpe me, sayd the Kynge of Mormal, syr, al we wyl counsayle you that ye delyuer to hym the honoure that God hath predestynate for hym; that is to saye, let hym haue my ladye Florence, your doughter; and vnto thys, syr, we al be agreed: how say ye, my lordes, do I say wel or not? And they al answered wyth one voyce, that they were al of the same accorde. And than the archebysshop was sente for, who was soone agreed to this purpose. Than the kynge sayde: Lordes and frendes, ye wyl that I shal doo thys as ye al be accorded vnto, wherewyth I am content: and if good happen to come therof it shal please me ryghte wel; and yf it be otherwyse, the blame shal be too you, for ye cause me thus to do. And they al answered, and sayd, that they were content to bere the burden therof. Than the bishop sayd: Syr, refuse not thus to do; for, syr, he hath bene assured to her euer sith y^e time y^t the chaplet was giuē him at Cornyte. Wel, sayd the kynge, syth it is so far forth gone, I wyl than make no longer delay in the mater.

Than he called Arthur to him, & sent for Florence, & sayd: Doughter Florence, I haue ben in cōmunicatiō before this tyme w^t themperour to haue married you to him, who as at thys daye I hate of al men lyuyng; for as nowe I wold not that I had done so for this castell full of golde and siluer: but now my kinges and peres of this relme doth cōsayle me to gyue you in maryage to this knight Arthur; and, if it please you, I am content therwith: therefore shew me your plesure. Ryght dere father, said Florence, he is nerer to my herte than euer was the emperour: syr, I wyl not refuse him, but am reday to fulfyl your pleasure. Than the kyng toke a ryng fro her fynger, and sayde to Arthur: Syr, here I giue you Florence, my doughter, & put you in ful possessyon of her by thys ryng, & of al y^e honoure that partayneth to her, to

haue duryng my lyfe, on the condicion y^t I wyll be kyng styl as longe as I lyue, & you to be kyng after my deth: & fro hence forthe I put the kepyng of all my realme into your handes, and I wyl syt styl in peas now in myn old daies, & ye shal haue the payn and trauaile yf dede requireth; and God be youre guyde in al your workes. Than Arthur kneled down, and toke the ryng. Than al y^e other iiii. kynges toke hym vp, and dyd him honour & reuerence as to their lorde and souerayne. And Arthur toke the fayre lady Florēce in his armes and kyssed her ryght swetely, the which he neuer dyd tyl the same tyme; and that he sware on al the saintes before y^e kyng, too put hym out of suspecte; whereof the kyng had great ioy, and so was clene out of al sorowe whan that Arthur was put in possession of the lady Florence.

Than there began great feast and ioy. And than they went to diner, and were serued right rychely. And than it was published throughout al the hoost, bothe wythin the castel and without, how that Arthur was ensured to the fayre lady Florence, and accorded wyth the kyng. Than in al the hoost there was made great feast and triumphe for ioy; and euery mā sayd to other: Now haue we a noble and a good lord; now let themperour do what he lyst; and blessed be the mother that bare this noble knight Arthur; and God saue al them that euer hath giuen counsayl in this mater. Than they al dyd sende vnto the kyng, and requyred hym that their new lorde myght come into the hoost, to thentent that they myght se hym. And whan the kyng herde theyr request, it pleased him righte wel, & commaunded that Arthur sholde be apparayled in royal vestures. Than Arthur was arayed as it appertayned to a lorde of suche a gret hoost: he had on a cote of skarlet, and a syrcoate of grene sarcenet, furred wyth menyuers, and ouer that a garmente of sylke rayed wyth golde, and a longe mantell of vyolet satyn; and he semed to be as fayre as an aungel descended from heauen. Than the kyng stode before hym, and helde in hys hande Florence, his doughter, who dyd ryght swetely beholde hym: and al the foure kynges and xii. peres stode and behelde hym; he was hye, and bygge, and surmountynge al other in stature. Than the kyng caused hym to mount on a fayre palfray.

And whan the lady Margarete saw him, she sayd to Florence: Madame, beholde what a manerly man God hath sente you: he had done more honoure for you than for any creature in all the worlde. Than the iiii. kinges, and xii. peres, and Hector, Gouvernar, Duke Philip, and the maister, and mo than v.C. other knightes, mounted on their horses, and conuaied Arthur into the host: & Clarence his good sword was borne al naked before him, in signifying that he was chiefe champyon of al the realme. Than the kynge caused to be cryed throughout al the host, how that he had cōmytted to Arthur al the cure and charge of his realme, and charged euerye body that they sholde obey hym as theyr propre kynge and souerayne lorde. And as he rode throughout the host and passed forby, euery man sayd: Welcome, our new lorde; God encrease thyn honour! And so euery man made great ioye to beholde hym. And thus the kyng soiourned at the Port Noyre viii. dayes, in great feast and ioye.

CAP. XCIV.

HOW THAT ARTHUR DEMANDED CONGIE AND LYCENCE OF KYNG EMENDUS, FATHER TO HYS LADY FLORENCE, TO DEPARTE INTO BRYTAYNE, TO SE THE DUKE OF BRITAYNE, HYS FATHER, AND THE DUCHES, HIS MOTHER; THE WHICHE LYCENCE THEY GAUE HYM WYTH MUCHE PAYNE: AND FLORENCE WAS IN GREAT SOROW FOR HIS DEPARTYNG.

At the ende of viii. daies the kyng made to be cryed y^t the hoost shold departe euery mā homewarde, and cōmaunded them to be redy at a day warning, & gaue them golde and syluer grete plenty. Than Arthur came to the king, & sayd: Syr, it is of trouth, y^t whan I departed out of myn own country I promised to

my lorde my fader, & to my lady mi mother, y^t, yf I lyued, I wold be wyth them agayn at the ende of v. yeres at the ferthest; the which shal be now at this Halontyde; and I knowe well, that yf I breke my promesse with them, they shal neuer haue ioy: and I am sure they wyl beleue no maner of messēger, though he be neuer so true; therefore, syr, by your licence, I wil depart and go se them, and returne again in as shorte space as is to me possyble. A! syr, sayd the kynge, take good hede what your desire is; for one thyng I promyse you, I wyl neuer put on my sporres for any thing of busines that mai hap to fal to my relme & yours, for the charge therof is now in your handes: therefore, sir, do as shal be for your honour. Syr, said Arthur, as longe as I lyue there shall nede no fere to be had: and certainly I wil tary as litel space as I may; for, as God helpe me, I wolde I had bene there and here again. Syr, here is the King of Orqueney, whō I shal leue in my stede to do euery thing in myne absence y^t shal be nedefull to the realme. Syr, I wyl take w^t me my cosyn Hector, Duke Philyp, maister Steuen, & syr Brysebar. Syr, sayd the kyng, take w^t you whome it shal plese you, sith ye wyl nedes go: depart whan ye wyl in the name of God, who be your guide & sauegard; and take youre leue of Florence or ye depart. Than Arthur wente intoo Florence chambre, whome he found wepyng; for it was shewed her how y^t he wold go into his owne countrey: she was set on her beddes syde, and the lady Margaret held before her a keuerchefe to wye wythall her eyen. Than Arthur enbraced her, and sayd: Mine own dere lady, wepe no more; for, as God helpe me, it greueth my herte ryght sore to se you do thus: myne owne swete lady, for Goddes sake be content. A! dere herte! sayd Florence, now that ye haue me and that I am gyuen vntoo you, and now ye wyl leue me: alas! it is but a lytel season that ye haue holdē company with me, wherfore I am right sorowful. A! right dere & swete lady! sayd Arthur, as God sende me ioye and sauegarde of you, there can not be to me so grete a sorowe as to leue your noble company; therefore, swete gentil herte, think not that I wyl leue or forsake you on whom all my hert and faithful loue is set and fixed, and by whom I haue al my welthe and honour; for I promyse you, as

faithfully as euer any loue can promise his lady, y^t as sone as I can I wyll returne agayne to you; for I shal think tyll y^t season be come as long or longer than ye shal do; &, madam, I do it not but for the loue y^t I owe vnto my lord my father and mother, for I fere me that they sholde be in sorowe for my sake: wherfore, mine own good lady & dere herte, giue me lycence to departe as for this time. Certainly, dere loue, quod Florence, I can not endure to displease you, and I se wel how ye be mynded to go, wherfore, in Goddes name, go on whan ye wil, and returne again as shortly as you can; and I requyre you brynge hyther wyth you my lord your fader, and moder, to thentēt that he may se me, who is and shal be his doughter. Madam, sayde Arthur, wyth a ryght good wyl, yf I can brynge hī thereto. And therewith he cleped and kissed her, the which was the second tyme that euer he kyssed her. Than Arthur requyred the fayre lady Margarete that she shold not depart out of his ladyes company. And therwyth tharchbyshop came to theym, and Arthur desyred him that he wold cōfort and cōsail his lady Florēce in hys absence.

And so he departed, and toke leue of the kyng and of al other, and so entred into his iourny; and toke w^t him Hector, Duke Philyp, the mayster, Gouvernar, & Brysebar, and xl. other knyghtes. Than Hector sent before them a messenger to his city of Orgoule, wher as Arthur was rychely receyued of the countes, and of y^e fayre lady Alyse, and of al the barons of that country; & there Arthur taryed iiii. dayes, makyng greate ioye: and on the v. daye Arthur and hys companye departed, and Hector with him; and so entred into theyr waye, makyng great ioy, as yonge people shoulde do, for they were glad of theyr newe lord Arthur, who was swete, yong, and curteys, and of gret power. And thus they rode forth so merely singyng: & the mayster was in a cote of sarcenet vyolet, and a mantel of redde sendal, and hys hat in his hand, because the wether was very hote, for it was in the moneth of August; and the mery mornyng was fayre and fresshe because of the swete dewe, the lusty byrdes dyd merelye synge, and the weder was fayre and clere; & this master was yong, hauyng a lusty heart, and ful of newe loue. Than he began merelye too

synge, sayinge : Thys swete payne of loue sleeth myne heart, and al is for you mine owne lady. And whan Arthur herde him synge, and consydered well the dyctye of hys song, he than perceyued wel howe that his hert was set on loue, the whych pleased hym ryght wel, and caused hym to remembre his ladi Florence. And than he said to the maister : Syr, dyd euer any loue cause you to wake one nyght ? By the moder of God, syr, sayd he, syth that I fyrst dyd thynke on my ladye, I was neuer so faste a slepe but that I thoughte my spyrit and hert was with her. Syr, sayd Brysebar, than though ye syng I blame you not, for I am sure ye thought on her. By the faith that I owe to God, maister, sayd Duke Philip, what was the thing y^t gaue you occasyon to loue your lady beste for ? What ! sayd the mayster, wyl ye than confesse me ? be ye a prieste ? I se well ye wyll plete with me, I muste defend my selfe ; I pray you, good mayster, yet shewe it vnto me. Well, syr, sayde the mayster, I shall shewe it to you. I loue her because she is gracious and gentyl of hert : for her grace and gentyl herte hath me retayned into her seruyce ; in so muche, that I quyte all the worlde for her : for, as helpe me God, I haue found in her, grace, gentylnes, and swetenes. Well, mayster, sayd Philip, yet for al this ye know not whether that she loueth you, or bereth to you any fayth or trouth. Yes, truely, syr, sayd the maister, I know wel she bereth to me bothe faythe and loue. Well, mayster, I praye you tell me whether had ye leuer to haue the loue of her without trouth, or elles trouth w^tout loue : for a woman can not well loue me, and you, and euery bodi, and do for you, and for me, and for other ; for in that point there lacketh trouth, whan y^t loue resteth not on him that attendeth therfore : and if she rest on him, than her loue is not generall ; and eyther she loueth you without trouth, or elles she is true without loue. What ! sayd the maister, loue w^tout trouth is nothyng worthe, for trouth is the vpholder of loue, for faythfull loue is fourmed of trouth ; and what profyte should it be for me yf she were neuer so true and loued me not ; the one can not be without the other : what sholde it auayle me to go seke for her troth and she loued me not, for loue is the drawer, and trouth is the vpholder, for trouth is the very end of

loue : and therwith he began to syng, Faith and trouth is in my dere lady : and so they al dyd laughe at him, and made greate feast and sporte.

CAP. XCV.

HOWE ARTHUR IN THE WAY, AS HE WENT TO BRITAYNE, HE ARIUED IN A FAYRE MEDOW THAT WAS IOYNING TO THE TOWNE OF LYON SUR LE RONE, AND THERE HE FOUND THE KYNG OF MALOGRE, ACCOMPANIED WITH DYUERSE ERLES & OTHER BARONS: AND THEY HAD THERE CRYED A GREATE TOURNAY; AND THERE ARTHUR AND HIS COMPANY WERE FRENDELY RECEIUED, AND HAD GRETE CHERE, BOTH OF THE KYNG AND OF AL OTHER LORDES & KNIGHTES.

IN thys maner, as ye haue herd before, Arthur & his cōpani rode forth til thei came wⁱⁿ iiii. miles of Lion, and thā they sent Bawdwin before to take vp their lodging. And as he aproched nere to the towne of Lyon, he sawe the fayre medow, the whych was betwene Vyen and Lyon, pyght full of tentes and paulyons, and swarmynge full of knightes and horses : and at last Bawdewyn espyed the paulyon of his olde lorde and maister, the yonge Kyng of Malogre, whoo did put him to Arthur ; & there was the erle of Forest, and the erle of Neuers, and the erle of Foys, and the marshal of Myrpoys, & the lorde of Beauieu, and the Dolphyn of Vyen, and a gret nūbre of other people : for they had holden a great tournay the day before, & the same daye the kyng had al these noble men at diner with him in his pauiliō, and in the next day they sholde departe. And whan y^t Bawdewyn sawe the paulyon of his olde lorde, the yonge King of Malogre, he dressed hym selfe the nexte waye thyder ; and without the paulion dore stode the lorde De la Launde, & with him a x.

other knightes; and al they beheld Bawdwyn as he was comyng; and eche of thē sayd to other, What is he that cometh so rudely, or fro whence cometh he? I can not tel, said an other, but it semeth he hath a gret hast: and euer Bawdwyn approched nerer and nerer. And at laste syr De la Laūde sayd: Verily me thinketh it shold be Bawdewin, my lorde the kinges squyer. Verily, sayd an other, & soo it is in dede. Than Bawdewin alyghted fro his horse. And whan syr De la Laūde saw veryly how it was he, as fast as he coude he ran & embraced hym, and made to him right grete ioie and feest: & knyghtes than of al partyes of the felde began to assemble there, tyll at last tydynges came to Alexander, the yonge kyng, how y^t his old seruaunt and squyer Bawdwyn was com. Than he commaūded that he shold be brought to hym; and so he was. And whan he was before the kyng, he kneled down & saluted the kyng. Than the kyng sayd: Frende! thou art welcome: & how hast y^a done syth thy departing? Certaynly, syr, sayde he, right well; for a man can not be in the cōpany of such a knyght as I haue ben withall that can fare amysse. In the name of God, said the king, and how fareth y^e noble knyght Arthur? Syr, by y^e moder of God, he dooth as the best renowned & praised knight of al the wide world, and the moost honoured, and moost hath done of dedes of valure and of prowess, I beyng present: and there he recounted many of his dedes, wherat the king and al other had grete meruayle: & more ouer, syr, sayd Bawdwyn, I saye that he is, at this houre, the mā of gretest power that I know now lyuyng: for he shal be the noble Kinge of Soroloys; for he hath ensured the fayre lady Florence, doughter & heyre to the mighty King Emēdus, King of Soroloys, who hath vnder hys rule foure myghty kynges, & xii. peres in his realme; and they be all his men, & holdeth theyr londes of hym. By my soule, sayd y^e kyng, this is a grete thing that ye speke of: &, frende, where is he now at this present time, or wher dyde ye leue him? Sir, beholde yonder ye may se hym comynge homewarde into his owne countre. Syr, I must go before into Lion, to take up his lodgyng. What be thei that come wyth hym? quod the kinge. Syr, there is wyth him a

noble clerke, who is called maister Steuen, & he is son to a kinge, & also the Duke of Sabary, named syr Phylp, & syr Hector, Duke of Orgoule, syr Brisebar, & Gouvernar, with other xl. knightes of grete valure. In the name of God, sayde the kyng, he shall haue in these parties none other lodgyng but al onely min.

Than he cōmaūded al the erles & barons about hym to mount on theyr horses, and commaunded to brynge hym his owne horse, for he sayd playnly, he wold go mete Arthur on the waye. Syr, said Bawdewin, ye say ryghte well, & do nobly to do hym that honour: for, syr, truly he loueth you entyerly; &, syr, I ensure you he is a man of ryght grete valure. And whā the lord De la Launde herde these tydynges of Arthur, he had ryght grete ioye, and ran to the lady, his wyfe, & to the lady Rossyllon, and to all other ladyes & damoyselles, & recounted to them the coming of Arthur, and reported of his demenyng and honour as he had herde Bawdewyn say before; and also he shewed them, howe that the kyng, and all the hole assembly, wer takyng of theyr horses to ryde to mete wyth hym on the waye. And whan these ladyes herde all this, they were in greate ioye bycause of hys comyng. Than the lady of Rossyllon sayd: I se wel thā that the crownyng that we dyd to hym, whā we sawe hym last, is well bestowed & employed on him; for it is a grete honour to vs syth he hath borne him so valyauntly euer syth: therfore let vs also goo & mete with hym, and byd hym welcome, and do hym al the honour that we cā do. In the name of God, sayd al the other ladies, & so let it be done. Than they apparailled them with ryal vestures; and by that time, the kyng, and al his erles, and other cōpany, were mounted on theyr horses, & the ladies & damoyselles also, & so rode forthe togyder in company. Than Bawdewyn spurred his horse as faste as he coude to brynge these tydynges to Arthur. And whā Gouvernar saw Bawdewin retourne agayne soo faste, he said to Hector: Syr, Bawdewyn torneth agayne, what it meneth I wote not. And whā he was come agayne vnto Arthur, he sayd: Syr, beholde yonder cometh the yonge Kyng of Malogre, & the erle of Fois, & the erle of Forest, & the erle of Neuers, the lord of

Beauieu, and the lord De la Launde, the marshal of Myrpoys, & the Dolphyn of Vyen, and all theyr ladyes w^t them, & they are comyng to mete w^t you to welcome you into this coultre, & mo than a M. horse in their cōpany; & the kyng wyl not suffre ye shal haue ony other lodgyng but wyth hym. And whā Arthur herde this, he had right grete ioye, and sayd: A! good Lord! I thāke your grace that ye haue gyuen me so many honours. Than he sayd to the mayster and to Duke Phylp: Syrs, holde you nere me: and so they did. And than he said to thē: Certaynly, syrs, ye shall se here people of a noble behauour, & honour, & wel ordred; and soo they rode forth fayre & easely, tyl bothe partyes approched nere togyder.

And as soone as Arthur sawe the kyng, & his barony, & specially the freshe ladies and damoysselles, he, and al his, dyd alyghte of theyr horses, and in lyke wyse dyde the kynge, and all his company, & there they mette and enbraced eche other with moche grete ioy and tryumphe: and Hector and Gouvernar were moche made of, bycause of theyr olde acqueyntaūce amōge theym. Than Arthur went to the ladies, and wold not haue suffred them to haue light fro theyr horses: but the lady Rossillon dyde, wheder he wolde or not, and she ran to hym and enbraced and kyssed him ryght swetely. What shall I saye more? all the hole assembly were in grete ioye, bycause of the commynge of Arthur. And whan Duke Phylp and the mayster saw the grete feest and honour that was done to hym, bothe of the kynge, and of all other erles and barons, knyghtes & squyers, ladyes and damoysselles; thā in their hertes they praysed Arthur more than they dyde before. Than Brysebar sayde: This gentylman, I se well, is none orphelyne in hys own countre: he nedeth not to care for the emperour, yf these people wyll helpe and ayde him. A! Florence, I se wel ye be well assured: woulde to God with a wisshe that ye wer now here present, that ye myght se thys ioye! And this kynge helde styl Arthur by the hāde, and demaunded of hym what knyghtes the mayster and Duke Phylp were? And he answered, & sayde: Syr, this is a souerayne clerke, a knight, and a duke, and sone to a kynge ryght noble and puissaūt; and, syr,

this other is Duke of Sabary, a ryght noble and a doubty knyght. Than the kyng toke theim by the handes, and said: Lords, ye be ryghte hertely welcome in to thys countre: and to you, syrs, we wyll make feest and ioye: as for Arthur we care not for; let hym make hym selfe chere and he lyste.

Than they mounted on theyr horses and rode forth towarde the tentes in the felde: and the kynge would haue had them to haue ryden before him, to thentēt to do them the more honour therby; but than the master sayd: Syr, for Goddes sake pardon vs; for, syr, we be seruantes to my lorde Arthur here presente, for we holde of hym: therefore, syr, by your licence, we wyll not ryde before him. Syrs, quod the kynge, as in that ye shal bere hym honour: therefore, by the faythe that I owe vnto you, ye shal ryde on before. So than they wente forth before and the earle of Forest, and the erle of Foys, and the erle of Neuers, were wyth Arthur; and Hector and Gouvernar wer with the Dolphin of Vyen and the marshall of Myrpoys: & in this maner they came to the kynges tente: and they dyde than wasshe theyr handes and went to diner. Than the king sate downe on the hye benche, and commaunded Arthur, the mayster, and Duke Phylp, to syt downe by hym, and all other according to theyr estates; and there they were rychely serued. Than the ladyes sente a presente to Arthur of freshē chaplettes, to thentent that he shold giue them where as it lyked hym best: and thā Arthur dyde gyue them vnto the kynge, and to the mayster, and to Duke Phylp, and to all other erles and barons. And whan they had dyned, than the lorde De la Launde came to Arthur fro the ladyes, and sayde: Syr, all the hole assembly of ladyes and damoyselles sendeth theyr recōmendacions vnto you, as to hym that they ones crowned kynge of all knyghtes that were assembled togyder at that tyme, and thei al desyre you, that ye wyll come in to theyr tent to sporte you wyth theym, and to brynge in your companye whome as it shall please you best. Soo than the kynge, and he, the maister, Duke Philip, and all the other erles and grete barons, went thider; and ther they were receyued with grete ioye and feest. Than these ladyes began to daunce, carowle, & to synge with these lordes and knyghtes.

And at the last the kyng sayd to mayster Steuen: A! gentyll mayster! and why doo ye not play and sporte you among these ladies & damoysselles? be they not metely fayre, gentle, and noble? Kyng, sayde the mayster, by my soule they are ryghte gentyl, noble, and beautiful; but, syr, with sportynge amonge theym I can lytle skylle. Why, mayster, sayd the kyng, what playe than wyll ye sporte you withal? Veryly, syr, sayd Duke Philyp, he can many goodly playes yf he wolde vse them, for there is not in all this world his matche. A! gētyll mayster! sayd the kyng, by the faythe that ye owe vnto Arthur, I requyre you shewe vs some of your sportes for a pastaunce. Mayster, quod Arthur, I praye you do so. Well, sayd the mayster, syth it pleaseth you, I am content. Than wⁱⁿ a while the mayster caused, in the myddes of the house, sodeynly a fayre fōutaine to appere, & in the hyest therof ther stode a horse of crystal, and out of diuerse places therof ther issued out stremes of swete cristalline water, and that horse stode quaking, semyng to be quycke; and rounde about this fountayne there semed to be fayre grene bussches & fayre grene hylles couered with vyolettes swete smellinge, and roses with other swete floures grete plēte, and dyuerse maner of byrdes synginge melodyously: & so all the ladyes & damoysselles that were ther, left their dauncynge and carowlinge, and dyde wasshe their handes at this fresshe fountaine, & made chaplettes of the faire floures that they sawe ther growing, and herkened to the swete armony of the byrdes; & they had grete meruayle what it might be, or fro whens it myght come so sodeynly: & all the lordes & knyghtes wer gretely abasshed w^t that syght. Than the mayster caused to be comynge into the hall ii.C. varlettes vested all in cotes of scarlet paled with grene, and ii.C. trompettes sowninge all at ones: than the knyghtes and ladyes behelde what it myght mene. And at last they entred into the hall; and after them, by seminge, ther cam a clerke ryght fayre and gracious, and he had on a robe of scarlet lyned with grene sēdall, and his cappe in his hande: & this clerke had standing by hym a freshe grene hawthorne full of fayre blossomes, right swete smellyng; and in the hyest of thys tree there was one brāuch that surmounted all

the other, whereon there sate a nyghtyngale, the moost fayre & gracyous of al the world, and best syngyng: than she lift vp her heed and fylled her throte full of wynde, the more shryller to verse out her swete voyce: her synging pleased so wel all the ladyes, that eche of them wisshed to haue had her in a cage.

Than y^e kinge and Arthur rose, & went nere to beholde this meruayle. Than the lady marshal put vp her hande to the entent to haue taken the nyghtyngale, but she coude not attaine therto. Than the clerke y^t kept the hawthorne sayde: Madame, & yf ye wyll haue my byrde, perauenture ye shall haue her, & yf ye be suche as ought to haue her: for yf it be so that ye or any other lady here in this company dyde neuer trespace in maryage, neither by thought nor dede, suche one may take her at her owne wil: but & yf they haue done ony faulte, let them not offre to haue her, for thei shal fayle of her. And whan the king herd that, he laughed a good pace, & sayd: Let se who wyl enterpryse to haue this joly birde: & than euery man was agreed that al the cou^tesses should assay eche after other. Than the lady marshal thought to haue departed away pryuely; but than the clerke called her agayne, & sayde: Madame, ye were the fyrste ryght now that wold haue taken my byrde, & so shall ye be agayne now at this tyme: therfore, madame, come forthe and assaye what ye can do. Than the king caused her to assaye, wheder she wold or not: and than she put vp her hāde, but she coude not attayne therto by two cubites of length. And whan the lady Rossyllon sawe y^t, than she said: Madame, this birde techeth vs to speke of our olde werkes; now it appereth yf ye haue ben alwayes in your prayers or not: ones ye said wordes to me, the whiche ye knowe not, but now I maye saye to you suche as I se. Than the cou^tesse and grete ladyes wēte one after an other, but all they fayled of theyr purpose. And at thende the kyng caused the lady Rossyllon to assaye; & as soone as she did put vp her hāde towarde the byrde, the gentyll nyghtyngale dyde descende downe and sate her on her hād: and yet thys was not to her very grete prayse, for she had not ben longe married. Than the erles dyde laugh at theyr wyues; but yet some of them were

not very well content. Than the mayster caused sodeynly all this to vanysshe away, both clerke and tree, byrde and all. Than euery man meruayled what this myghte be, & they wende that they had dremed al this: and the kyng smyled at this mater: and wente and sate downe togyder, the king, and Arthur, and the mayster, and all other lordes. Than the kyng sayde: As God helpe me, I would it had cost me the halfe parte of my realme, soo that thys mayster were alwayes in my company, and that he loued me as well as he dooth Arthur. Syr, sayd Arthur, he hath ryghte wel shewed to me that he loueth me; for, syr, syth I departed fro you I haue had warre with vii. kinges & an emperour: and, syr, this emperour wyll come again nowe at this nexte Eester to make warre wyth the myghty King of Soroloys, for the defyaunce is made betwene both parties: wherfore I must retourne agayne as shortly as I can. Why, syr, said y^e kyng, shall ye than haue warre the next Eester? Ye surely, syr, for it is sworne and cried on bothe partyes. And whan shall ye wedde this lady Florence, of whome I haue herde so muche spekyng of? Syr, sayd Arthur, if God-wyll gyue me the honour of this warre, I shall wedde her incontinent after. By Saynt John, syr, said the kyng, I wolde I were at y^e warre, at the day of your wedding. Why, syr, sayde the dolphyn, and ye wold so, the go thider. Why, syr, sayd the kynge, yf I go, wyll ye go also? Ye, syr, wyth all my herte, & that I faithfully assure you. Wel, said y^e king, kepe your promesse, & I ensure you y^t I wil go with v.C. men of warre in my cōpany. And I promyse you, sayde the dolphyn, y^t I wyl go & a C. men of armes wth me. And without me shall ye not go, said therle of Forest. Promyse y^t faythfully, quod the kynge; & as muche sayd therle of Neuers. And so ferre wente this matter, that y^e erle of Moūtbelyall, & the erle of Foys, & the lorde Beauieu, & the marshall of Mirpoys, promysed all togyder, y^t eche of the wold go with ii.C. in theyr company, & there appoynted agayne to mete in y^t same place in the middes of lent. Than Arthur thanked them, & sayd: Syrs, I truste at the sayd daye to be here agayne wyth you, & brige wyth me my dere fader and moder, & soo than we wyl departe togider. And

whan these ladyes herde how y^t Arthur wold bring thyder the duchesse, his moder, than they all desyred of theyr husbondes that they myght go with the duchesse whan she were come: & the kinge was well content therwith, and desired the erles and barōs that it myght be so. And soo at the last it was agreed and accorded that they should al go togyder. Thus was Arthur and his company iii. dayes with the kynge and with these erles, in grete feest and ioye.

CAP. XCVI.

HOWE THAT ARTHUR, & HECTOR HIS COSYN, WITH ALL THEYR COMPANY, ARYUED AT BLOYS; AND HOW THE ERLE OF BLOYS, FADER TO HECTOR, AND THE COUNTESSE HIS MODER, AND ALL THE HOLE BARONY OF THE REALME, MET THEM ON THE WAY, & RECEYUED THEM WITH GREAT IOYE, FOR THEY HAD BEN BEFORE IN GRETE FERE THAT ARTHUR THEYR NEUEWE AND HECTOR THEYR SONE HAD BEN DEAD.

So on the fourthe daye Arthur & his company toke leue of the kyng, and of the erles, and barōs, ladyes, & damoyselles, and toke his ryght waye towarde the towne of Estampes. Than Arthur sēt Jaket hys squier before to Blois, to giue the erle knowlege how that Arthur his neuew, & Hector his son, would be with hym the Sodaye nexte folowyng. Than Jaket departed, and mouēd first to Orliaunce; & there he founde therle of Bloys, who was ryght sorowful in his herte bycause he coude here noo maner of tydynges of Hector his son, wherfore he was in grete doubte leest that he sholde haue ben deed. Than Jaket mounted vp in to the hall where as therle was: & as soone as he sawe Jaket, he rose, and enbraced hym, and demaunded of hym howe that Arthur and Hector his sone dyd? As God helpe me, syr, sayd Jaket, they

do humbly salute you by me; and sendeth you worde how that they wyll be wyth you this Sondaye nexte comyng, hole & in good helthe, thanked be God! as grete lordes and puissaunt knyghtes; for, syr, I saye vnto you how that Hector your son is Erle of Brule, and Duke of Orgoule, & is ryght riche & puyssaunt. Ye, Jacket! said the erle, & who hath gyuen him this honour? Syr, by the moder of God, my lorde Arthur, who dyde conquere it with his swerde, as he that is the best knight of all the world. A! good Lord! said therle, humbly I thanke youre grace syth that my chylde is so well puruayed. Than the erle dyde sende a messenger to al hys frendes, giuing them knowlege how that his sone was coming home warde, who was become ryght puyssaunt and noble, cōmaundinge them for ioie to hange the stretes of the towne.

And as soone as the coūtesse herd of these tydynges, she mounted vp in to her charyot, & came to Orlyaunce to the metynge of her sone: & so therle and all his company dyde mete Arthur, & Hector, & theyr company, at Clerry; and there receyued them with grete chere & ioie. Than all the noble men of the countre came thyder to se Arthur & Hector: and so all togyder they went to Bloys; and there they seiourned viii. dayes, makyng great feast and ioie.

CAP. XCVII.

HOW ARTHUR ARYUED IN BRITAYNE; AND HOW THE DUKE HIS FADER, & AL HIS CHIUALRY, METTE & RECEYUED ARTHUR WITH GRETE HONOUR & TRYUMPHE; AND HOWE Y^t THE DUTCHESS HIS MODER SWOUNED FOR IOYE WHAN SHE SAWE HER SONE ARTHUR: AND IN LYKE WYSE DYDE JEHANNET HYS OLDE LOUE, WHEROF THE MAYSTER & PHILIP HAD GRETE FERE LEEST THAT JEHANNET SHOULD DRAWE AWAYE ARTHURS HERTE FRO FLORENCE, BICAUSE OF Y^e GRETE LOUE Y^t THEY SAWE BYTWENE THEM.

At the ende of viii. dayes Arthur called to hym Jaket, & said: Frende, ye muste go to my lorde and fader, and to my lady my moder, and to Jehannet, and salute me ryght humbly vnto them; and shewe them how y^t I wyll be wyth them the xv. day after Saynt Martyn; & shew also to my lord and fader how that ther cometh in my company a sone to a king, and a duke ryghte myghty and puissaūt; than saye, that I desyre hym to sende for parte of his frendes to kepe them company whan they shall be come to hym. Sir, said Jaket, I shal do your message in the best wyse; for he was gladd to go. Than Gouvernar sayde: Jaket, I praye you let me be humbly recommaunded to my lord, and to my lady, & to Jehannet. It shal be done, syr, sayd Jaket: and so departed, & rode so longe tyl at laste he came to Nautes, on a Fryday at night; & there he demaunded tydynges of the duke; & there it was shewed hym how that the duke & the duchesse were departed to the castell of the Forest, and fro thens thei shold depart to thabbey of Jannebon, & than thei shal come to the cyte of Vennes, and there to soiourn nere tyll it be Crystmasse, & than to come agayne to Nautes, wher as thei wyl kepe open courte; for he hath somoned al his barōs to be ther at Crystmasse with hym.

So than Jaket taried al that nyght at Nautes, and in the mornyng he departed, & wente to Vennes, wher as he foude the duke

and dutchesse ; and thei were as than lokinge oute at the windowes of the palays : and there thei talked togyder of dyuerse maters, tyl at last the dutchesse began to wepe. Than the duke demaunded of her why she soo sore wept? Why, syr, sayde she, alas ! beholde the great noblenes of this countrie, and the fayre forestes that be therin, and the valure & bounte of the lusty countre of Brytaine. Alas ! syr, who shal kepe and obtaine this coultre after vs, syth that Arthur our dere sone is deed? And, syr, we shall neuer haue mo chylde togyther. Alas ! syr, whan I remembre al thys, my hearte dyeth in my body for sorowe. Dead ! madame, sayd the duke ; nay, and God wyl : for yf that were true we should haue greate nede of comforte : but yet I haue trust in God that he shal sende vs ioye of oure chylde, and to heare shortly some good tidinges of him : it is not yet fully v. yere syth hys departyng, and within that terme hys promes was to come agayne : wherfore, madame, I praye you to wepe no more, for it greaueth me to se you do thus.

And as they were thus talking together, Jaket came intoo the palays, and entred into the hall. And as sone as the knightes and squiers saw Jaket, they enbraced him, and demaunded howe that Arthur did? And he answered how that he dyd ryght wel, and was comynge homewarde. Than Jaket mounted vp into the chambre, and there he found the duke and the duchesse togyther ; and the duchesse espyed hym fyrst, and ranne to hym, and sayd : A ! my frende, howe dothe Arthur, my sonne? Madam, he humbly saluteth you, and also my lord here present, and also Jehannet. What ! Arthur, my son, frend ! said the duke, and where is he? Syr, he wyl be here with you by thend of these fyue dayes. And howe dothe he? sayde the duke. Syr, as the moost honoured noble knight & best proued that is now liuyng in this world : for vnder the heauen there is no knyght of hys valure and hye prowesse. And, syr, he hath gyuen too Hector, his cösin, an erledom and a duchy right grete and noble : he is now two times as rich as the erle his father is. Ye, Jaket ! quod the duke, where hath he goten thys land, and who hath giuen it hym? Syr, as God helpe me, Arthur dyd gyue it hym, and he wanne it

valiaūtly with his sworde: but, syr, this dede is nothinge to the regarde of a thousande dedes that he hath done syth he departed. Than the duke smyled, and ioyned his handes togider, and lyfte vp his eyen to heuen, & thanked God. And the duches wept for ioie, and so dyd Jehannet also. Than the duke sayde: Jaket, and who cometh wyth my son Arthur? Syr, there cometh wyth hym a clerke of great wysedome, and is chiefe counseler with the fayre Quene Florence, and he is son to a king right mighty and puissant; and also there is with him a mightye duke, who is called Duke Philip of Sabary, and other dyuerse noble knightes to the nombre of xl. Why, frende Jaket, sayd the duke, is Arthur than so muche honoured, that a son of a kynge, and a duke, and so noble a companye, cometh with hym? Verely your son is in this case, that, or thys yere go out, he shal be crowned kynge of a puissant realme. A! good Lorde! sayd the duchesse, I rendre to you grace and thankynge, syth ye haue giuen to vs suche a chylde of whome is reported so much honour. Wel, quod the duke, madam, mount vp into your charyot, & let vs go to Naūtes, & mete hym there.

So than they departed, and went fro Vennes, & came to Naūtes in an euening late. And Arthur and his cōpany rode so tyl at last they came to Samur, and entred into the Abby of Saint Florent; and there he lodged al y^e night, and was wel receued and honestly: & in the next morning Arthur sent a messenger to his father, giuing him knowlege how that he wolde be with hym at Nauntes on the Sondag next comming. And whan the duke herde that, he sayde to the duches, his wife: Madam, let vs go & mete our son and this noble cumpany that cometh with him: for I haue greter desire to se hym than all the world. And thā by that time al the dukes frendes, louers, and subiectes, were come to him, to the nombre of v. hondred. Than they all togider mounted on their horses. And Jehannet was in the chayre wth the duches. And so they rode forth, & wythin thre leges thence they met wyth Arthur and al his cōpany: & as soone as Arthur sawe hys father, he dyd alyght, and dyde of hys bonet; and in lykewyse dyd his father to hym; and there they cleped & kyssed eche other oftentymes.

Than the duke sayd : My swete frende, and dere chylde ! ye be ryght hertely welcome home to me, as he that hath ben more desired with me than al the creatures liuing. A ! dere sone ! howe could ye euer haue the hearte thus to leue your mother, who hath ben so dolorous for your absence, that she hath wept euer syth your departyng ! And as the duke ended these wordes, his mother came too hym, and cleped and kyssed hym : but she was so ouercome with ioie, that she could speake no worde of a great season : but so they sate downe togyther ; & whan she might speake, she sayd : My swete and dere chylde ! ye haue longe holden vs in darknes ; nor neuer, sythe ye departed, my herte was in anye ioie : but now, swete hearte, my ioie is increased that I may haue you in mine armes. And therewyth she kyssed hym, and wept right pitiously for ioie : so that Arthur coude no longer kepe his herte and eyen fro wepyng ; the whych he didde neuer before syth he came out of hys childhoode, nor neuer after did for no maner of trouble that came to him. And whan y^t Duke. Phylp saw y^e pityfull and ioyful metyng betweene the chylde & the moder and y^e fader, and saw how y^t they wept ; for al the golde of the world he could not kepe hym selfe, but that hys eyen were ful of droppes of water. Than came to them Jehannet, and cleped & kyssed Arthur right tenderly, and sayd : A ! my loue Arthur, ye be hertely welcom vnto me. Syr, ye left me right sorowful whan ye departed last out of this countrey ; but my swete lady, your dere moder, hath kept me right tenderly for the loue of you ; and oftentimes we haue wept togyther our fyll for the loue of you. A ! mine own swete loue ! I vnderstand that God hath gyuen you a better & a more gentiller lady than I am. Sir, al this agreeth me righte well ; for, syr, I haue ryght great ioie of youre welth. Syr, I offre me to serue you and to loue you with good faithful hearte ; for ye are my lord, and I am your doughter. And therewith she wept right tenderly, & toke Arthur in her armes. And whan Arthur sawe her so wepe, he could not kepe his eyen fro dystylling of salte teares for her sake : for he loued so the damosel, that he was sore tempted to haue repented him in y^t he had fyaunced Florence. And whā the mayster saw the great loue of the fader, & the moder,

& their chyld, and of Jehānet, he sayde to Philyp: Syr, I doubte me of these people, leāst they w'draw away fro Florence Arthurs hert; & I pray you behold and se how they loue him. Saw you euer so muche honour done to any creature liuynge? Fere not, quod Philip; he hath brought me into this country, I warant you he shal depart agayn and returne in to ours.

Thā the duches and Arthur rose vpon their fete: than all the noble men of y^t country came aboute him, and made hī as gret feast and ioy as they could. Than the duke went to the master and to Duke Philip, and receued them w^t gret honour. And so they al mouēd, and went to Naūtes; and there than all the burgeyses of the citie yssued out all in one sute and lyuerey, and met wyth them. And also the byssshop of the towne and al the hole clergie encountred them, and made great ioy: and generally so dyd al those of the citie. Than the duke made grete honour vnto Duke Philip, and vnto the mayster. And whan they were alyghted fro their horses, than they mounted vp into the palays, where as they made great feast and ioye the space of xv. dayes, and than euery man departed.

Than Arthur sayd to the duke, his father; & present there was the mayster, Duke Philip, and the duches, syr Oliuer of Yriac, and diuers other barons; there he recounted all hys fortune, and how that he had fyaunced Florence, and how that the warre is begon and taken betwene him and thēperour of Ynde, and howe that al thys warre was layde on his hande and charge: and therefore he prayed the duke, his father, that he wold go with him into the countrey of Soroloys, to thentent to helpe hym. Than the duke sayde: Sonne Arthur, w^t a right good wyl; and I shall brynge wyth me all my strength, wyth baners dysplayed: and thā yf we may fynde this emperour we shal shewe him what that Brytons can doo. And whan the mayster herd that, he smyled, and he cleped the duke, and sayde: Syr, ye haue nobly answered w^tout any counsaile: it semeth wel ye are the father & he is the son: syr, by the faythe that we owe vnto God, we shal kepe you good company. Than y^e duke sente all about for hys strength. And in the meane seasō Arthur ledde the mayster, Duke Philip,

syr Brysebar, and al the other knightes of Soroloys, in al the townes and cities of his coutry. And thus thei passed the time til it was nere Lente, and than they retourned againe to Nautes, where as they found al theyr host redy apparayled to departe. Than Arthur toke of the x.M. after bys owne choyse; & al the remenaunt he sente home agayne, to thentent to kepe the coutrei in sauegarde in the dukes absence. And they sojourned iiii. dayes at Nautes; & so departed, and toke the hye way to Lion: & sir Oliuer, Gouvernar, & Brisebar, had y^e cōueiaunce of the host: and y^e duke, Arthur, Hector, the master, and Philip, toke theyr way streight to Parys, to take leue of y^e Kyng of Fraunce, who receyued them w^t right gret ioy & honour, for he loued the duke entierly. And the kyng made greate chere to the mayster & to Duke Philip. The master praised much the noblenes of Fraūce. Thus they were iiii. dayes w^t the king; and than they departed, and the duches w^t them, and toke their leue of the king. Thā the kyng sayd to the duke: Syr, yf ye lacke men of warre ye shall haue parte of my strength. Thā the duke thanked hī, and said: I trust we haue people sufficient. So they departed, and rode so lōg on their iourny til they came to Lion on a Wednesday in the morning: & there they fōūd Gouvernar, Brisebar, & sir Oliuer, who had made redy for their lodgings. And thā the Kyng of Malogre, and al his erles & barons, were assēbled togider, & wer lodged about Vien. And whan they knew y^t Arthur was comming, they mounted on their horses, & met w^t him; and they al made gret honor too the Duke of Britayne: and the ladies receiued the duches ryghte honorably; and so they rode forth togider. And than y^e yonge king ran to the mayster, and enbraced hī in his armes, for he loued him wel becaus of his maruelous cūning. Than thei came to the paulions, and there alighted; & the dukes paulion was pight vp right richely; and there they sojourned iiii. daies in gret ioy: and the king desyred the master y^t he wolde shew as than some pastaūce amonge that company. Than the kynges squyers were afore hī ready to do seruyce. Than the maister caused eche of them to thynk eyther wythout any head; and eche of them behelde other, and were greatlye abasshed,

and had gret maruayle where theyr felowes heades were become. Than they loked on the erth, whether they were fallen downe to the ground: & therwyth they sought eche others head all aboute the house: and the kyng, & al the hole assēbly, had ryght great sport thereat. Than on the fourth day they al departed, & toke theyr righte way to the Porte Noyre. Gouvernar, Brisebar, & sir Oliuer, dyd guyde forth the hoost; and Arthur sent Bawdewyn, his squier, before to the Porte Noyre, to apparayl and garnysh the castel, & too drawe thither al his garnysons. Thys noble cōpany rode so long, tyl they came but a dayes journey fro the castel of y^e Port Noyre.

Now let vs leue spekyng of them as for this time, and returne to Florence.

CAP. XCVIII.

HOW, AFTER THAT ARTHUR WAS DEPARTED FRO KYNGE EMENDUS & FLORENCE TO GOSE HIS FRENDES, FLORENCE THAN DEPARTED FRO THE PORTE NOYRE, & THE QUENE OF ORQUENY, & THE LADYE MARGARETE OF ARGENTON, WYTH HER; AND WENTE TO SPORTE HER IN HER OWNE REALME AND CASTEL OF CLERE TOURE, WHEREAS THE EMPEROUR CAME AND BESIEGED HER; FOR, OR SHE WAS WARE THEROF, HE AND HIS COMPANY WERE LAYDE ROUND ABOUT THE TOWNE; AND THEY WERE TO THE NOMBRE OF TWOO C. THOUSAND, WHAT OF EMPERYENS AND OF SARASYNs.

It is trouth, y^e whā Arthur was departed fro y^e Port Noir to go into Fraūce & into Brytaine for to se his frends, thā Florēce, & the Quene of Orqueney, and the lady Margarete, were of accorde that they wolde not go with Kyng Emendus into the realme of Soroloys, but they determyned to goo to Clere Toure, and there to abyde

tyll the retournynge of Arthur, where as they myghte euery daye priuely talke eche vnto other of their loues. So than Florence toke her leue of the kyng, her father, & so departed, and toke with her the Quene of Orqueney, and the ladye Margarete, and a xl. other knightes with them: and so thei trauailed tyl they ariued at the Clere Toure, & there they were in gret sport and ioy. But it is oftentimes sayd, he y^t hath an yl neyghbour hath oftentimes an yll mornynge; for as sone as Florence was come to the Clere Toure, & that it was knowen that she wolde abyde there a good space, syr Perdykas prouided for al thinges that was necessary for the place, than a spye went to themperour of Ynde, and sayd: Syr, Florence is now at the Clere Toure: and, sir, ye may now, and ye wyl, soone haue her; for she is come thider but priuily; and but w^t a smal company.

And whan thēperoure herde that, he sent incontinent for as moche people as he coulede get betwene hym and Babylon: and he assembled there togyther so muche people, y^t al the coutry was ouer spred with them. And Florēce knew nothing of al thys tyl the tyme that the emperour had besyeged her round about wyth mo than ii.C.M. men. And whan she saw y^t she was in that case, she was right sorowful, and wept pytyouslye, euery day more and more; for she sawe wel she could not sende out for no socoure to any body, there was suche watche made al about the place. Than she bewailed Arthur, and said: A! Arthur! swete frend! ye are ouer longe fro thys busines: certainly if ye lese me ye shall lese youre true louer. A! dere loue! I am yours, & now ye know no thyng in what mischefe I am in: for now your louer is in gret peryll. Thus Florēce made the grettest lamentacion of y^e world; and her people dydde comforte her in the best wyse y^t they mighte.

Now let vs leue spekyng of Florence, and returne to Arthur.

CAP. XCIX.

HOW Y^t ARTHUR WAS RYGHTE SOROWFUL, BECAUSE THAT HYS HORSE
DYD STOMBLE VNDER HYM; AND HOWE THE MAYSTER SHEWED
HYM HOW THAT FLORENCE WAS BESIEGED BY THEMPEROUR IN
HER CASTEL OF Y^e CLERE TOURE, WHEREOF ARTHUR WAS IN
GRETE FEARE AND TROUBLE.

WHAN that Arthur and al his host were wythin a lege of the
Porte Noyre, Arthur, and the duke hys father, and the kyng,
and the maister, rode eche by other, talkynge of dyuerse matters,
sodenly Arthurs horse foundred vnder hym and fell grouelynge to
the earth: but Arthur helde hym styl in the saddell, tyll the horse
and he rose bothe agayne togyther; and fro thenceforthe Arthur
was in so greate a study, y^t no man could haue a word of hym but
wyth gret paine; and in this maner he endured a great season.
Than the kyng began to reason wyth hym, but he could skant
haue any worde of hym. Than the kyng and Duke Phylp
called to them the mayster, and sayde: Syr, what ayleth Arthur?
for sith his hors stombled he wolde neuer speke no worde by his
wil: we maruayl what he ayleth. Well, sayd the mayster, go
to hym and demaunde hym the question. Thā they rode to hym;
and the kyng rode on the one syde, and Duke Phylp on the other
syde, and the mayster before hym. Than the maister al laughyng
began to synge melodyously, and the kyng and Duke Philip did
laugh at him: and Arthur euer rode forth, as though he had bene
halfe a slepe, and wyth the sporte that they made he lyfte vp hys
eyen: and whan he saw them aboute hym makynge suche sporte,
a lytell he smyled. Than the mayster said to him: Syr, what
chere is wyth you? what sport make ye to my lorde the kyng,
here presente, who is come hither for your loue, sir, now ye be
come into youre owne realme, and into your own power? and,
syr, these lordes haue forsaken theyr owne cuntryes to come
hither with you. Than he answered, and sayd: Gentyl maister!

pardō me, for I knowe wel ye say but trouthe; but, syr, I ensure you, euer syth my horse fell vnder me, my herte hath bene so heauy, that I cā in no wyse make any good chere: I can not tel what it meanethe: I pray to God all be for the best: I doubte me greatly of my lorde the Kyng of Soroloys, or elles of my ladye Florence, lest that this emperour hath done to theym any tribulacyon. Syr, sayd Duke Phylp, doubte not that; for, yf it were so, ye may be sure my lorde and vncle would soone haue sent messēgers to you: therfore make good chere, & reioyce your barons and such noble men as be come hether for the loue of you, and namely this great hoost who hath so far trauayled for your sake. A! dere frende, Duke Phylppe, sayde Arthur, I requyre you make ye than good chere and semblant. And so than the kyng and Arthur, the master and Duke Philip, rode forth together throughout al y^e host, & comforted their people as wel as they myght. Than they ariued at the Port Noyre, and mounted vp intoo the palays; and all the hoost was lodged withoute in the felde: and al the ladyes and damoyseles that came thither with them, maruelously behelde the strength and situacyon of that place, and reputed in theyr myndes grete noblenes and valure in Arthur, for the acheuynge and conquerynge of that place. Than the mayster dyd deuyse too them all the aduentures that were in that place. Than the duches, moder to Arthur, had ryght great ioy. And than the master led them to the gardyn to se it: and whan they sawe the place so fayre & so delectable, they wysshed neuer to departe thence. So than these ladyes wente and rested them at the fountayne. And Arthur, and the kyng, Hector, and al the other erles, & the lorde Beauieu, were al together in cōpany, but Arthur was styl in melancoly.

Than the mayster wente into his owne chambre to loke his bokes, to know what was the cause that Arthur was so sadde; for than anone he perceyued, by hys bokes and cunnynge, what peryl that Florence was in, and how themperour had besyged her rounde aboute. Than incontynent he went to Arthur, and sayde: Syr, the matter goeth yl to worke, for this emperour hath besieged Florence in her castel of Clere Toure with a great numbere of

people; so my lady is in great mischef, w^tout remedy be soone found for her: she wepeth right pitiously, and maketh the gretest lamentacyon of the world: she cryeth out on fortune, and saith: Alas! now haue I al loste! I was borne in an vnhappye houre! A! gentyl hearte, Arthur! God, that al thyng fourmed of nought, kepe and defende you from al yl encumbrance, and gyue you honour; for, as for me, I am at grete myschefe. Fortune, shame haue thou, for thou hast done me manye troubles. Alas! my swete loue is far fro me; and min enemy hath approched nere me. My loue is absent; and him that I hate is to nere my presence. Alas! myne owne swete loue Arthur! if I were in your armes, than I wold thinke my selfe better assured, than to be in this strong castel; for than wold I neyther feare kyng nor emperoure. Alas! where are my men, & my good frendes, that they doo not theyr dylygence to study for my deliuerance? A! Kyng of Orqueney! ye do a great trespase ayenst your true & faythfull louer Arthur, whan that ye do not delyuer me out of daunger. He loueth you aboue all other; and nowe ye to be thus false to him! Certainly he wold neuer haue fayled you, but he wold haue put his body and goodes in ieopardy for your sake; and now thus ye to leue me in this dolour! Alas! good kyng! come and delyuer me; and, yf ye can, rendre me vnto this gentyll knyght Arthur, who loueth you with all hys harte. Thus, syr, said the mayster, I know wel that she dooth complayne euery daye wyth suche wepyng chere, that I must nedes wepe whan I thynke on her: and the Quene of Orqueney, and the lady Margarete, dothe comforte her al weping, for it greueth theyr hertes to se her soo sore wepe: & thys, syr, all thre of them be in grete sorow, I can scant tell you who is in y^e gretest. Saint Mary! said Arthur, it was not for nought that my hart was so heuy: now I know well the sygnification therof. Alas! mayster, and doth not King Emendus know what case that she is in? Yes, syr, said the mayster, he assembleth people on al sydes of his realme of Soroloys, & also al hys iiii. kinges wyth al theyr powers be com to hym, and they are all ready to drawe thiderwarde, & they wyll remeue a Monday next commynge, but it wyl be a xv. dayes or thei come thyder: and, syr, all the kinges

cōplaineth gretely that ye be out of the countre; for they say, that yf ye had ben in the cōūtre, themperour had neuer ben so bolde to haue come thyder. Syr, I doubt me gretely of Florēce, for she hath not past a xl. knightes with her: wherfore I fere me leest that she can not endure to kepe the place tyll the kyng, her fader, and hys hoost, be come thyder. And whā Arthur herde that, he was sore displeased, and sayd to the yonge Kyng of Malogre: A! gentyll kyng! I requyre you, for Goddes sake, let me go thyder, or elles I shal dye for sorow; and, syr, I pray you abyde here with all this hoost tyl Monday, and than let the hoost folow after me to the Clere Toure; and let Duke Philyp, and my senesshall, and the Markes, haue the guydyng of them: and, syr, my lord my fader shall abyde here styll with you, and also my lady my moder, and all these ladyes & damoysselles, tyl suche season as I sende you worde: and, syr, I wyl haue with me the mayster and Hector, Gouvernar and syr Brysebar.

And whan all the barons harde hym say that he wold go, thei counseiled him to take more people with him, but he wold not, and soo toke a soppe in wyne & toke leue of the kyng, and of all other, and embraced his fader and moder, & cōmaunded to God all the other ladyes and damoysselles, & soo he departed and his company with hym, and rode forthe as fast as euer they myght, and trauayled so longe, bothe by daye and by nyghte, tyll thei came nere to themperours hoost. Than Arthur sayd: Lordes, we approche nere to our enemies; I thinke it wer best that we dyd put on our harneys: and soo ther they alyghted and dyde put on theyr harneys.

CAP. C.

HOW THAT ARTHUR & THE MAISTER, HECTOR, GOUERNAR, AND SYR BRYSEBAR, ENTRED INTO THE CLERE TOURE WHER AS FLORENCE WAS BESYEGED, & THEY V. DYSCOMFYTED A PUYSSAUNT KYNG SARASYN WHO WAS CALLED THE SOWDAN, WHO WAS COME THYDER TO HELPE THE EMPEROUR; AND THER WER AL THE SARASYNs AND TURKES SLAYNE.

WHAN that Arthur and his iiii. felawes were armed, they moūted on theyr horses, & rode forth tyll it was about thre of the clocke. Than thei rode to the botom of a grete mountayne, and there thei alighted: & Arthur alone a fote mounted vp to the hiest therof, and there he saw the castell of the Clere Toure, wheron there were pynacles of bryghte cristall, and it dyde shyne so agaynst the son, that no man coude clereli loke ayenst it: and he saw themperours greate tent; and besemyng to him al the world was there of people: & he saw well howe that people laye rounde about the castell, so that none coude issue out, nor none entre into the place; and he saw wel how that on y^e same syde that he was on, ther were lodged a great nombre of Sarasyns: and than Arthur complayned pyteously for the mischefe y^t he saw his lady Florence in at that tyme. And as he thus behelde the castell, he sawe where as there came towarde the moūtayne a lx. Sarasins all armed. Than Arthur wente downe to the valey agayne to his company, and said: Lordes, I thynke all the world of people is in this countre: how shal we be demened? Syr, said Brisebar, ther is no more to do, but let us moūt on our horses & do as knyghtes shold do: syr, there is none of vs but y^t is wel worth a knyght. Wel, sayd Arthur, now y^t shal be seen, for yonder cometh a lx. or moo of oure enemyes to awake vs yf we slepe. Let them come, sayd Gouernar: and he toke a grete spere and dyd plunge it in the reste: and therewith the Sarasyns wer come, who saw well these v. knyghtes; and one of them presed forth before his felawes, and Gouernar with his spere slew hym;

& than the mayster strake so another with such vertue, that the spere wēt clene throughout his body : than he set his hande vpon his swerde, & laye on so amonge hys enemyes, as a wolfe dooth among lambes. And whan Brysebar saw hym do suche dedes of armes, he sayd : Here is a good mayster, he chayseth sharpely hys dysciples. Than Brisebar strake the first that he encoūtrede with so rudely, that his harneis auailed him not a bottō, for he was persed to the harte : than Gouvernar and he bette downe Sarasyns euen as he wolde hym self. And whan Hector saw that, he fered leest all the Sarasyns shold haue ben slayne or he had done ony thyng agaynst them. Than he rushte into y^e prese, and cut of armes, handes, & legges, & made hedes flye into the felde, & bet downe Sarasyns & horses meruaylously. And whan Arthur saw al this, he smiled and sayd : Lordes ! leue me my parte : what ! me thinketh ye take all ! y^t is none egal partyng. Than he dasht into the thickest of the prese ; and the first he sent to the erth, both Sarasyn and horse ; & the seconde he claue downe to the chynne : and ther he gaue so puyssaūt strokes, that he confōded al that euer he attayned vnto : &, to make short, these v. knyghtes dyd so valyaūty, that of al these lx. Sarasyns there escaped not one, but thei wer all slayne. Than Arthur sayd : Lordes ! let vs now deuyse how we may fynde the meanes to entre into the castell ; it is so closed on al sydes, that none can entre into it, but he must passe fyrst throughout xxx. thousande men of war. I suppose this emperours hoost endureth v. leges in brede, so I can not se how we should entre : euery man gyue his aduyse and counsayle, for here on this parte of the castel that we be on is all ouer spradde wyth fel Sarasins. Syr, sayd the mayster, suffre a lytell, and I shall gyue you my counsayle how we shall entre into the castell. I shall cause vs all to loke, for the season, as blacke as any pytche, so y^t it shall not be knowen but for Sarasins. Let vs arme vs with the armure of these dead Sarasyns, and than let me ryde on before, & I shall lede you sauely throughout al their hoost, for I cā wel speke the lāguage. Ye saye well, said Hector. Thā thei al armed thē w^t the harneys of the Sarasyns y^t thei had slayne, & thā they moūted on theyr horses, & the maister rode on before

til thei came to the Sarasyns tēt, & the maister had on the harneys of the Sowdanes seneſshal, who was slayne before by Arthur; & the Sarasyns that sawe hym wende verily y^t it had ben the seneschall, & thei demaunded of him fro whence he came? And he answered, and said: Frendes, I go to play me all aboute the felde, and I purpose to go to the castell gates to entre in yf I may, and to slee al theym that be wythin the castell. Than there were dyuerse that offred them self to haue gone with him, but he sayd he would haue no more company than he had, and said: Syrs, there is none of you that shal go wyth me: therfore I charge you, on payne of your lyues, y^t ye stere not tyll ye here me blowe my grete horne, & thā come as fast as ye cā.

Thā the maister & his company rode to the castel gate, & called y^e porter, & said: My frende! opē the gate & let vs in, & God shal rewarde you, for we are Cristen men and are sodyours: & I promyse you, that yf ye wyl let vs in & the lady of the place receiue our seruyce, than shal she do like a wyse lady. Syrs, said the porter, & ye be soudiours, ye be welcome, for my lady hath grete nede of suche: than he let downe y^e bridge & opened the gate: thā these v. knightes entred, and the porter lyfte vp again the brydge, and closed the gate againe after them. Than it was shewed Florence that fyue straunge soudiours were entred into the castel to helpe & to ayde her: than she comaunded that they should be brought to a chambre and vnarmed, and than to be brought to her presence. And whan thei were vnarmed and looked so blacke, euery man was afraied of theym; and some said, God giue grace that they be not spyes: and so thei were brought to Florence; and as sone as she sawe them, she trēbled for fere: & whan she sawe that they wer al goodly persones and moche lyke of stature, she fered theym gretely leest thei had ben spies, & demaunded theim of whens thei were? And they answered how that thei wer Sarasyns borne, but as than thei had renewed theyr byleue, and were crystened in Fraunce, at Parys, and the Kyng of Fraunce was their godfader. And than she demaunded of them wheder thei came streyght out of Fraūce? And they answered yes. Than the lady Florence demaunded of them, and said:

Freundes! dyde ye euer here of a knyght who is named Arthur, and he is sone vnto the Duke of Brytaine? Yes truly, madame, sayde they, we herde wel of hym: he departed from Parys the same season that we dyde departe, and he dyde haste hym gretely to come into this cowntre, and he bringeth with him the duke, his fader, and the duchesse, his moder, and wel to the nombre of x. thousande other knyghtes redy apparayled for the warre: and, madame, as it is sayd, he bewayleth gretely a gentil damoyssel of this coultre, for whose sake he hath oftentimes ryght pyteously cast forthe many a grete syghe; and, madame, oftentimes he speaketh and complaineth to a grete man of dygnitye, who is in his company: and also, madame, as it is said, that there is one wyth hym that is named mayster Steuen, and an other Gouvernar, and the thyrde Hector, and dyuerse other that we haue forgotē the names of them. Wel, syrs, sayd Florence, I se well that by suche tokens as ye reporte, that ye haue seen them: but, I pray you, dooth Arthur thinke so moche on y^e lady that ye speke of? Ye, madame, truely, sayd the maister. Than the lady Florence begā piteously to wepe, & the lady Margarete helde redy a keuerchefe to wpe her eyen therwith. And whan Arthur sawe her wepe so, he said: Right fayre lady! wepe no more: for surely we shal neuer faile you tyl death haue made an ende of vs.

And as they were thus talkyng to Florence, the Sarasyns in the felde that saw them enter into the castel in that peasyble maner, than thei perceiued wel how that the leder of theim was not the sowdans senesshal, and thought veryly that they had a great mocke: wherfore they al ran to their armure and armed thē, & moo than v. hondred of them wēt to the castel, and dyde knocke and bete at the gate. Than the watchemen of the castell dyde crye: Syrs, to harneys, for parte of your enemyes are at the gate! Thā euery man of the castel ranne to the windowes to loke what it myght be: and whā Arthur sawe how it was, he commaunded his company to arme them; and soo they armed theym, and soo dyde all that were within the castel; for syr Perdicas caused a grete horne to be blowen, and by the sownyng therof, all tho of the castel ranne to their harneys. Than Florence said: Freundes!



Plate 24.

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Our Heath. Firenze

for Goddes sake yssue not out of the castel, for ye be not able to resyste ayenst their pōwer, thei be so many in nombre and ye soo few: but I requyre you defēd this castel as wel as ye may. Madame, said Arthur, be ye in rest and peas, and let vs alone hardely. Than he mounted on his horse, and so dyde his other foure companions, and to the nombre of xl. other knightes of the castel, & so he rode to the gate, and caused the porter to set it open. Than Arthur, by grete randon, dasht into y^e prese with his white shelde couered al in blacke, and holdyng a grete hatche in both his handes, & laid on rounde about hym on those Sarasins, that he made hedes, armes, and handes, to flye into the felde, and bet down horses and Sarasyns in suche wyse, that it was maruayle to behold him: and Hector and Gouvernar, on their partye, bette downe Sarasyns by grete hepes: and the mayster, Brysebar, & syr Perdycas, dyde as valyauntly as onye good knightes ought to do: but, aboute all other, Arthur dyd excellently; for he layde on rounde about hym, & confounded al that euer he attayned vnto; so that euery man fledde fro before hym, & said how that he was a deuyl of hel, and none erthly creature; for he auoyded the stretes where as he passed, & made gret hepes of dead knightes, so that Florence knightes had grete meruayle of him; and also Florence, and the Quene of Orqueney, and the ladi Margarete, blissed them at his dedes, & sayde how that he lacked but lytell of the prowesse of Arthur. And at the last Hector was beten downe, for his horse was slaine vnder him; and soo his enemyes had thought to haue ledde hym awaye as a prysoner: and therewith Arthur came thider, and in that fury he slew moo than xv. knyghtes, and remounted Hector agayne on his horse in the spyte of al his enemyes; and than he dasht agayne into the prese and bette downe all that euer he attayned vnto: and Brysebar and the mayster dyde ryghte well theyr partes, but specyally Arthur made place before hym. And whan Florence sawe these v. knightes do so valiauntly, she said vnto suche knyghtes as were aboute her: Syrs, for Goddes sake, and ye loue me, goo and helpe to rescowe yonder fyue knightes.

Than the grete comyn bell was souned, and euery man than ranne to theyr harneys, and so they were to the nombre of an

hondred and an halfe on horsebacke, & iii. hondred on fote, who were in lōg jackes and grete basenettes on their hedes, w^t good swerdes girt aboute them, and longe speres in theyr hādes, to the entent to slee with them theyr enemyes horses: and soo thei yssued out of the castel and slew many of the Sarasyns, that within a lytle whyle they were nere all dyscomfyted.

And whan the Sowdan sawe this people so ouerladen and slain, he caused a grete grisley horne to be blowen: than euery mā that herde it ranne to their harneys, so that they wer to the nombre of xxx. thousand: and the Sowdan was a yonge lusty couragious knyght, and mounted on such an horse, that ther was none lyke him in al the world in goodnes; for who so euer was mounted on his backe, neded not to doubt ony man lyuynge: for what by force of the horse and of the man, there was none by lykelyhode that might resyst ayenst him. Than the Sowdā dasht vnto his horse with his sharpe sporres, and he rushte forth as though he had flowen in y^e aire lyke a byrde. And whan Arthur sawe hym coming, he desyred gretely to haue that horse: than he toke a great myghty spere and ran at the Sowdan, and brake hys spere by the might of that horse, for the horse was able to haue borne two men armed without any payne: and as Arthur passed forth after his course, the Sarasyns enclosed hym rounde aboute: than he drewe his good swerde Clarence, and there he slew of hys enemyes wythout nombre; but thei charged him with so many strokes, that they slew his hors vnder him: than he lepte on his fete & dyde put hys whyte shelde before hym; and with Clarence, hys good swerde, he did cutte so among his enemies, as a carpenter doth hewe chyppes out of a gret tree: and thei did shote at him with their bowes of Turkey, wherwyth they dyde him moche trouble; & more had done and hys good whyte shelde hadde not bene.

Than Florence sayde, as loude as she coude crye: Saint Mary! swete Virgin! saue and defende yonder good knyght frō all daūger and peryl! And whan Arthur harde her voyce, his hardines encreased; for such was the maner, of the more that he had to do, the more was his strength, and was euer of more courage: and thā

he lyghtly lept in amonge hys enemyes, and began so to deseuer a sonder the grete flockes of the Sarasyns, that none approched nere him, but y^e he receyued death for his mede. At the laste Hector espyed hym, and saw how that he was on foote; wherwith he was so dyspleased, that he was in a grete rage: thā he couched hys spere, and ran at the Sowdā, who was rennyng at Arthur; but Hector strake hym so rudely, that he persed hym to the harte, and soo he fell downe dead: than Hector toke hys good horse and delyuered hym vnto Arthur. And whā Arthur hadde hym, he was more gladder of the horse than he would haue ben of all the tresour in Fraunce. Than he mounted vp on him and rusht into the thickest of the prese, and ther he dyde meruayles wyth his handes; for there he cutte of armes, handes, and legges: he claue a sonder helmes, and made hedes to flye in to the felde, and bette downe knyghtes & horses all togyder in hepes; and than ther was none that he encoūtreth withal that escaped from the deth. Than ther came vnto hym the mayster, syr Brisebar, and syr Perdycas, and xl. other knyghtes vpon horsebacke of Florence company, and thre hondred on fote: than they al layde on these Sarasyns, and bet them downe lyke dogges. Than Arthur encountred the Sowdans broder, and gaue him suche a stroke with his good swerde Clarēce, that he claue hym downe to the sadel.

And whan the Sarasyns sawe howe that the Sowdan and also his broder were dead and slayne, thei made suche roring and sorow among them, that the emperour, as he was in his tent, myght well here the noyse, and demaunded what it was? And one shewed hym how that it was y^e Sowdan who was scarmusshīg wyth them of the castell. And therewyth ther came to hym a knyght who hadde one of his armes clene stricken of, & sayd: Syr emperour, the Sowdā is deed, and his broder, Saladyne, also slayne; for, sir, ther be come vi. as I thynke rather deuylls of hell than erthly creatures, for they haue all slayne and cōfounded; and specially there is one among them that maketh waye where so euer that he cometh: there is none so hardy that dare abyde him a stroke of his handes, but all fleeth before him: therefore, syr emperour, call your mē to harneis, or elles we shal be all slayne. Than the em-

perour was sore dyspleased, and sayd : What hondred deuylls of hell hath brought hider these vi. knyghtes who thus confoundeth all my people? Than he cryed, To harneis! and caused hornes to be blowē in his hoost. Than euery man ran to their harneys, soo that anone there were togyder more than an hondred thousande men. And Arthur, Hector, Gouvernar, y^e maister, Brisebar, & syr Perdykas, wer all besprente with the blode of the Sarasyns that they had slayne. Than the Quene of Orqueney, who had all the daye well aduysed Arthur and his dedes, sayde vnto Florence : Madame, certaynly I thynke that yōder knight is Arthur; for, as I deme, yonder shelde is your whyte shelde, and I thynke he that is by hym is Hector, the mayster, Gouvernar, and syr Brysebar. Madame, sayd Florence, that can not be, for thei are as blacke as ony ynke. And as they thus talked, thei sawe where as the emperour was comyng, and a hondred thousande folowing after him. A! swete lady Mary! sayde Florence, kepe and defende nowe yonder knyghtes, for I fere me now that they shal be slayne. And the emperour came thiderwarde as faste as he might, with grete noyse of trompettes, tabours, and hornes. And whan that the mayster harde that, he came to Arthur, & sayd : Syr, we haue to lytle nombre of people to abyde yonder emperour at this tyme : we haue done al ready sufficient for one daye : therefore, syr, let vs retourne agayne to the castel, for our company are ryght sore trauayled. Ye say wel, said Arthur; cause the retraite to be blowen; & so it was done. Than Arthur & his peple entred into the castell, & closed the gate after them, & drew vp the brydge; and they had slayne in that batayle to the nombre of xv. thousande Sarasyns. Than Arthur mounted vp into the palays; & Florēce mette wth him, & she dyd of his helme, and thanked him gretly, & al his company, of the paine & labour that thei had takē for her sake that day. Than they loked out at the windowes, & saw where as themperour was beholding the dead bodies of the Sowdan, & of his broder, & of the xv. thousand other Sarasyns.

CAP. CI.

HOW TRUSE WAS TAKEN FOR A MONETH BETWENE THEMPEROUR
AND ARTHUR.

AND than Arthur, out of a widow, called downe to the emperour, & said: Syr emperoure, ye do your selfe grete shame & vylany: ye haue yl counsaile thus to come on a woman by stelth, and vnder thassurance of truse that was takē betwene my lord, her fader, & you, thus to cause so nombre of people to come on her. Syr, if there were in you eyther valure or trouth, ye wold not thus haue done: first ye sholde haue giuen her warninge, and haue made your defyaunce, & haue giuen her certayne day of batayle, and than to haue taken her yf ye myght. This, sir, sholde haue bene your honour, & not thus to awayte her in her chambre, with all thys nombre of people, and she nothing knowyng thereof before. Well, sayde themperour, what so euer thou art, thy tong is fayre fyled: wolde to God I had y^t head of thine y^t lokest so blacke! Why, syr, sayd Arthur, and wolde ye than so fayne haue my hed? Truly, sayd themperour, on y^t condicion I wold it had cost me one yeres rent of al my landes. Ye, syr, sayd Arthur, than gyue thys lady a certayne day of batayle, that she may in the meane season send for her people, so y^t she may answer you: and, syr, I promyse you that I wyll be there; & than get my head and ye can. Truly, said themperour, I am content: but what assurance shall I haue that ye wyll be there? Syr, sayd Arthur, by the fayth y^t I owe vnto my special lady. Wel, sayd themperour, and I giue her daye for a moneth, & truse in the meane season. And so than the assurance was made on bothe partyes. Than Arthur sayd, holdynge Florence by the hande: Syr emperour, beholde what a jewel this is. Syr, ought not a man to be ryght iolly to obtayne suche a lady? so tēder, so swete, so ruddy of colour! Than y^e emperour was sore displesed, and sayde: What! y^u pratyng fole! me thinketh thy vysage is couered

ouer w^t blacke cordewan : wold to God I had the in my kepyng ! Sir, sayd Hector, all smylyng, take no hede of his saying, for he is but a fole. Than themperour departed, & went to his tent.

Than Arthur said to Florence : Madame, we haue now truse w^t themperour ; so that we may wel prouyde for men or the trewse breke, for the terme thereof is a monethe. Wel, syr, quod Florence, I thanke you therof, & of the paine y^t ye & your cōpany hath taken this day for my sake : but, syr, I shall deserue it whan I may. Madame, it is alredy deserued. But, madame, may it plesse you to leue the louing of the knyghte y^t ye say ye loue so wel, and take me to your loue, & gyue me your loue, and I promyse you I shal deliuer you from thys emperour : for this other knyght is now in Fraūce in gret sport, and thinketh but litell on you, for he hath many fayre ladies in his country at his cōmaundement. Syr, said Florence, his sport and ioy is a great plesure to my hert : for I am his both wyth hert, thought, & body, and neuer to be fals to him : for, as helpe me God, I had rather suffre my hed to be striken of, than I sholde do or think any false-nes to him. Why, madame, loue ye than him so inwardly & so truely ? Ye, or elles, sayde she, I pray to God I neuer haue ioye in thys worlde. Well, than, sayd he, I se wel that my loue can not preuayle. No, be ye sure, said Florence ; therefore be ye in peace, and speke no more to me therof. In like wise the mayster praied the lady Margaret of her loue, desyryng her to loue hym & to forsake the clerke. And she answered, y^t to dye in the payne she wolde neuer be false to hym. Than Arthur sayde to the maister : Let vs leue these ladyes, for we are come to late ; for by seminge they are ensured to other. Syr, sayde Florence, I know not your name ; but I desyre you go and vnarme you, and than we wyl go to dyner, for our mete is readye.

Than they were ledde into a chambre, and vnarmed. And than Brysebar, whan he sawe his owne handes soo foule and black, it abhorred him, and said : The deuyl take this blackenes so that we were rydde thereof. Than he sayde to the mayster : Syr, I requyre you take awaye thys blackenes fro me, and fro al my cōpany. Than the maister laughed a grete pace, and so dydde al

hys company. Well, sayd Arthur, I am wel agreed that it sholde be nowe taken awaye fro vs al, for it is time. Than the master toke a box, and dyd anoynte theym all, and than they al were in theyr fyrst coloure. Than Arthur toke on hym as chefe, and in a goodly syrcote he entred into the palays, where as Florence taryed for them to washe their handes. And as soone as she sawe them, she knew well Arthur, and them al. Than she ranne to hym, and embraced and kyssed hym swetely before them al, and sayd: Myne owne lorde, dere hert, and loue! ye be ryght hertely welcome, as he for whome I haue wepte many a salte teare: but, syr, I praye you who made you so blacke as ye were ryghte nowe? Madame, by the fayth that I owe vnto you, mayster Steuen: and there recounted to her al y^e cause why. Than there began gret fest and ioye throughout al y^e castel, & also throughout al the town, whan it was knowen how that Arthur and Hector were comen in to the castel: than they were in their myndes better assured than though the Kyng Emendus and all hys power had bene there. And lady Margaret made as grete chere to the mayster as was to her possyble. And so they went to dyner, and were ryght rychely serued. And after dyner Arthur sayd to Gouvernar: It is nedeful for vs now to puruey for euery thyng that is necessary to vs, to thentent that we be not deceyued at the daye of oure batayle; therefore I wyll that ye go to my lorde, the Kynge of Soroloys, & recommaunde me humbly to his grace, and shewe hym how that I am at the Clere Toure; and recounte to hym how that we haue spedde, and how that we haue truse for the space of a monethe, and than is the daye set of batayle betwene themperour and vs. Also salute fro me the Kynge of Orqueney; and say how that I desyre him to somon, agaynst the sayde terme, all the power of Soroloys, both on horsebacke and on fote, so that they may be here about the end of foure wekes; and I wyll in the meane tyme go vnto my lorde, my fader, and too al his company, and brynge them hyder.

And whan Florence herde that, she sayd: Syr, haue ye brought them into these partyes? Ye, madame, truly: and with my father there is a noble kyng of that couñtry. And, fayre loue, where be

they? Madame, I left them at the Porte Noyre. Well, sayde Florence, I requyre you go to them, and bryng them hyder: for I woulde gladly be acquaynted with my lorde, your fader, whose doughter I am, and trustynge so shall contynue: but I praye you tell me how doth my lady, your moder? Madame, I ensure you she is also at y^e Port Noyre, accompanied wyth fyue or syxe countesses, who haue left theyr own cuntryes to come hyder to se you. A! dere herte! sayd Florence, blessed be the houre that euer ye were borne, sith that ye haue broughte so noble a company wyth you to se me: for now my fader, Kynge Emendus, shall not thynke that I am yl bestowed on you. Syr, I requyre you let me se them as shortly as ye can. Thā Gouvernar toke his leue, and departed towarde Soroloys.

CAP. CII.

HOW THAT THE YONGE KYNGE OF MALOGRE, AND THE DUKE OF BRITAYNE, WYTH DYUERSE OTHER ERLES AND BARONS, AND ACOMPANIED WITH A GREAT ARMYE OF MEN OF WAR, ARYUED AT THE CLERE TOURE, TO THE ENTENT TO SOCOUR FLORENCE AND ARTHUR, WHO WERE BESYEGED BY THEMPEROURE; WHO HAD NYE ENRAGED OUT OF HIS WYTTE, WHAN HE KNEWE THAT THEY WERE COME INTO THAT COUNTRYE.

IN the morning betimes Arthur departed, & toke w^t him Hector and Brisebar, & toke w^t him v. other knightes of Florence, & the master abode styl w^t Florence. Thus Arthur rode forth a iii. leges, and than he espyed the baner of the duke his fader, and of al his hoost: for the yonge Kynge of Malogre hasted hym as muche as he myght, for the feare that he had of Arthur. And whan Arthur sawe the baners and standardes wauering with the wynd, and the helmes and sheldes shynynge ayenst the sonne,

than his hert smiled, and said : A ! gentil Fraūce ! God encrease thine honour and noblenes ! And than he approched nere to his fader, and made hym reuerence : and there was great ioye at their metynge. And the duke demaunded of hym howe that he hadde spedde ? And he recounted to hym, and to his company, al y^e hole matter as it was done : and so they rode forthe together tyll they came into themperours hoost.

And al that season Florence was lening oute of the batylmentes of the toure, for with her eyen she had conuayed Arthur before as farre as she myght ; and at the last the Quene of Orqueney had espied the Frenche hoost comynge, and sawe the Frenche baners displayed with the wynde. Saynte Mary ! said she, fayre lady Florence, what people be yonder, that I se comynge hyderwarde ? I thynke it be themperour. And whā Florence sawe them, she was in fere of Arthur, and sayde : Alas ! I doubt that yf they haue encountred my loue Arthur, that they haue slayne him ; and therewith she began to wepe. Than a knyght, who came streyght from Arthur to thentent to shew her how that he was coming, sayd : Madame, be wel assured, for yonder people that ye se comynge are pertaynyng to my lorde Arthur. Than she apeased her selfe : and fyrst she sawe the greате baner of the Duke of Britaine, and saw helmes and sheldes flambe ayenst the sonne : also she behelde the goodly company of yonge knyghtes mounted vpon good horses, and she herde horses braye and bete with theyr fete : than she praysed muche in her herte the noble countrey of Fraunce : she thought it was a better syghte of theym than it was of the men of warre of her owne country ; for they were more better horsed, and harneysed a great dele more properly. And than they saw coming, after that, the gret baner royall of the Kyng of Malogre, and her heart reioysed to se the noble company that came with hym : than she sawe the Erle of Neuers baner, and the noble Burgonyons ryghte properlye besene : than therle of Foreste, and the dolphin in his company ; and than came therle of Foys ; and than the Earle of Mountbelyall ; than the lorde Beauieu ; and laste of all came the banner of Myrpoys : and al thys company were to the numbre of xv. thousande knyghtes, chosen for the nones. Than Florence sayd :

A! my swete loue Arthur! it semeth wel that ye are not behated in your own countrey, syth ye brynge wyth you so many noble men of warre, and of so great dygnytye. Certaynly, madam, sayd Margaret, these people wyll dystroye thys emperoure and all hys hoost: they seme noo men, but rather aungelles of heauen: beholde, madame, howe lyghte and quycke they be in their armour! A! noble realme of Fraunce! blessed be thou, syth suche people cometh out of the! And whan their people were lodged, than Arthur caused the king, and the duke his father, and al the other erles and barons, to mount vp into the castell. Than the kynge sayde too Arthur: Syr, I requyre you shewe me the gentyll Florence. Ye, fayre son! sayd the duke, shewe me my dere doughter that shall be. Syr, ye shall se her anone, sayde Arthur. Than he sente before Duke Philip too Florence, to thentent that she should make her selfe fresshe against theyr comyng: and as sone as she sawe Philyp, she made to hym ryghte greate ioye, and demaunded hym howe that he dyd, and howe that he liked by the realme of Fraunce. Madame, sayd he, I lyke it verye well, for I ensure you Fraunce is a noble gentyl countrey. Madame, beholde here cometh the noble Duke of Britaine, fader to Arthur; and with him King Alexander of Malogre, and dyuerse other erles and barons, who are coming hither to se you; & Arthur desyreth you to aparaile your selfe w^t vestures of joye. Than she went to her chaumbre, and apparayled her selfe according to her estate, and as to receiue such noble men as were come to herwarde: and the Quene of Orqueney & the fayre lady Margaret dyd helpe her.

Than these lordes alyghted at the peron, & so mounted vp into the palais. Than the master ran to Florence, and said: Madam, come on your way, & se the Duke of Britain, & the king, and other erles and barons. And she who was the gentyl rose on the lily, yong and tendre, alwayes hauyng a smylyng countenaunce, and the mooste gracyous of al the worlde, yssued out of her castel, and two knightes ledde her forth; and two other knightes led the Quene of Orqueney. And whan the yonge kynge, and the Duke of Britaine, & other erles, sawe her, they marueled greatly of the excellent beauty y^t God had giuen her. Than the king stept

forth, and his bonet in his hand, and enclined him selfe to her, and right swetely did salute her. And she answered him, and sayde : Syr, ye be ryghte hertely welcome into this countrey ; the whych is, and shal be, at your noble commaundement, and al other thinges wherof I haue anye power. Than the kynge dyde salute al the other ladies eche after other. Than the Duke of Britayn came to Florence, and sayd : My right dere lady ! God encrease your noble honour, as vnto the mooste noble ladye of al the worlde. Than Hector sayd : Madame, thys is the Duke of Britaine, father to Arthur : wherwyth she was ryght gladde, and embraced hym, and sayd : Syr, ye be right hertelye welcom into the lond of Florence, your doughter, as he y^t shal be myne own lord : into whose handes and protectiō fro hens forth I put me and al my realme of Soroloys. Than he toke Florence by the hand, and wolde not let her depart for no bodye that came to them. Than all the other erles and barons did salute her, and she rēdred agayne to them suche salutacyon, y^t euery man was wel content ; and euerye man marueled gretly of her beauty, and of the wyse and sage wordes that she had to euery body. So than the king, and the duke, and Florence, sate them downe togyther ; and the lady Margaret toke therle of Neuers, and therle of Forest, & sate down w^t them ; and therle of Mountbelial, and y^c dolphin, and the lord Beauieu, wer lokinge out at the wyndowes, and behelde the emperours greate hoost : and at last Arthur and the master came to them. Thā the dolphin said : Sir Arthur, as God helpe me, I haue grete desyre to knowe what people these be that be here with this emperour, & to se how they can couche their speres. Let vs go to them, sayd the lorde Beauieu, & let vs make them know how Frenche men be come hyder. A gret shame take he, sayde therle of Mountbelyal, that fayleth, or wyl abyde behynde. Well, syrs, sayd Arthur, yf it please you, we shal not do thus ; for than shold we breke our truse, and not kepe our promes made to them : for than they wold repute vs fals in breking of our couenauntes : and, sir, Frenche men haue bene alwaies reputed true ; therfore let vs abyde tyl the daye be come, w^tout so be that they breake the truse their selfe. And, sir, sayd the lord Beauieu, how

longe shal youre truse yet endure? Syr, quod Arthur, it must endure yet a xv. dayes. A! syr, sayde the dolphyn, if it were not you, shame haue he that set the daye so longe. What! all thys longe season we shall but lye here styl lyke swyne, and do no good.

And as they thus talked they herd grete noyse without in themperours hoost; for there was a gret rumour amonge them because of the Frenche hoostes commyng into the castel; and therewith they saw euery man runne to their harnes: and anon they espied themperours senesshal mouëd on a good horse, & a great spere in his hand, and his shelde about his necke, & he came streyght towarde the Frenche hoost, who were lodged without the castel gate, to thentent to know what people they were: but the lorde De la Launde, whan he saw him coming in y^t maner, he thoughte he desired too haue justed wyth some of the Frenche men: than he mounted on his hors, and toke a gret spere, and ran at y^e senesshal. And whan the dolphin sawe that, he sayde to Arthur: Sir, me thinketh by the lorde De la Launde, that he thinketh but lytel on your truse; for, yf he dyd, he doothe not wel thus to do: I praye you beholde how fast he runneth. Ye, syr, sayd Arthur, I se him wel: God kepe his body from any hurt. And whan the senesshal saw hym comyng so fast towarde hym, he plunged hym selfe in hys sadell, and dyd caste his spere from him, and put his shelde behynd him; for he wold not just, because of brekyng of the truse. And whan the lorde De la Launde sawe y^t, he knew wel he was not comyng to just, therefore he discharged him selfe, and reined his hors. Than the senesshal saluted him, & demaūded what people they were y^t were newe come to the castel with such an host? Certenly, syr, they be people of Fraūce, who dyd here tidynges of a great warre that this emperour shold haue shortly; & therefore we be come into this country as soudiours, retaynyng vs who so euer wyll. Souldyours! quod the seneshal; & therewith he lyfte vp his eyen, and beheld the hooste ouer al: and there he saw the goodly yong squyers vntrussing of their somers & cariages, and pitching vp of their têtes and paulions; and he saw y^e goodly knights ren their horses vp and

downe in the feldes, some lyghtyng, and some mountyng; and there he sawe the armerers furbyshe the harneies, & the speres and sheldes flaming agenst the sonne, the baners, standardes, and stremers, wauering with the wynd. Than he sayde to hym selfe: Saynte Mary! what people are these? are they mortal men, or aungelles of Paradyse? whoo may endure ayenst them? A! Fraūce! an honourable country aboue al other; blessed be thou that nourissheth vp suche people! Than he sayd to the lorde De la Laund: Gētyl syr, wil not these people abyde, and be retayned with my lorde themperour tyl his warre be done, and he shal giue them suche wages and fees, that of reason they shal be content? Syr, sayd the lorde De la Launde, yf ye wyll knowe the certayne, go and speke with our lordes and maysters, who are entred into the castel to go speke with a ladye: I wote not what she is; but, as it is reputed, she is right gracious and fayre. Saynt Mary! sayd the senesshal, yf I go thyther, I doubte me of them wythin the castel leaste they take and kepe me styll there as prysoner; wherfore I wyl go fyrst and speke with my lorde themperour.

Than he departed, and went streight to themperours tent, and said to him: Gentyl emperour, there is come out of the noble realme of Fraunce the moste goodlye company of men of warre that euer was sene in al this world; and, as I deme, they be wel to the nombre of xv. thousande: & one of thē shewed me how that they were souldiours, and the capitaines are gone into the castel to speke with Florence. Syr, I feare me lest that Arthur hath retained them on his party, for he can get mucche people; therefore, syr, after my counsaile, ye shal sende to them in fayre maner, and desyre ye them to become your men duryng your warre: and yf they wyl do so, than gyue them largely bothe of golde and of syluer, and suche other thynges as they nede; for, syr, and ye may get them, ye shall be able to conquere al the world yf ye lyst. Than the Kynge Jonas sayde to themperour: Syr, it were but well done to knowe what people they were, & wherfore they be come, for I vnderstande that Arthur hath bene in Fraūce: and, sir, it myght fortune that he hath brought them with him, to thentēt to anoy you: and, syr, yf they be come to make warre ayenst you,

than begyn ye fyrste on them, and rather to daye than to morow, and strike of al their heades, and hange vp theyr capytayne, and slee Arthur quycke: and as for the strompet Florence, deliuer her among our knaues and boyes, for she hath done you ful great anoyaunce: and therefore, syr, sende to yonder people of Fraūce, who are new come, wenyng to wynne al the worlde, and commaund them to come to your seruice: and if they wil be with you, than entrete them as ye shold do straungers; and if they wil not come to you, than cōmaunde them, on paine of theyr lyues, incontynent to depart out of this coutry: and, syr, yf they wyl not do thus, graunte me the enterpryse, and I shall ensure you to get you all their heades. Than the senesshal was in hys mynd dyspleased with the folysh proud wordes, and sayd: By God! syr king, yf ye eate no mete tyl al this be done, I fere me lest it wyl be to late for you to ete: but, syth it is your mynd, I counsayl my lord y^e emperour, here present, to giue you leue to acheue this enterprise, eyther to bryng them to my lordes seruyce, or elles they to departe out of this realme, or elles al their hedes. In the name of God, sayd the Kyng Jonas, I praye & requyre my lorde themperour to giue me lycence to acheue this enterprise yf I can, and I promyse faythfully to go speke w^t them or that I slepe, without ony lōger delay, and I shal knowe what is their wylles and myndes. Certainly, gentle kynge, quod themperour, ye haue a noble valiaūt herte: do as it pleaseth you, for I gyue you leue. Than he toke his gloue, & the kynge toke it, and thanked him; & soo than they wente to dyners. And all the noble company of Fraunce and Brytaine were in the Clere Toure, where as they dined in grete delyte and sporte, and were serued right richely; and after diner thei sported them tyll it was aboute one of the clocke.

CAP. CIII.

HOW THAT KING JONAS, AL ALONE, CAME TO THE CASTEL OF THE CLERE TOURE, AND THERE DYD HIS MESSAGE FROM THEM-
PEROUR OF YNDE THE MORE.

THAN Kyng Jonas yssued out of the emperours hoost, al armed, wel and fresshely mounted : and so all alone, without ony company, he came to the Clere Toure ; and vnder a fayre olyue tree he alyghted, and mounted vp into the palays : and there he founde Florence, & the Kyng of Malogre, and the Duke of Britayne, settinge togyder. Than the Kyng Jonas spake before Florence, in open audience, so y^t euery man myghte well here hym, & sayd : The hye souerayne God, who all thyng formed of noughte, defende & kepe the puyssaunt Emperour of Ynde the More, and all his frendes, where soo euer they be, here or elles where. Fyrste to the, Florence, there as thou syttest, I saye fro the mighty emperour, y^t thou go to him, al onely in thy kyrtel, on the bare fete, w^t thy heere hangyng about thy sholdres, and on thy knees crye hym humbly mercy of y^e gret outrage that thou hast done to hym, and I thynke that he wyll haue mercy on the, that thou shalt not dye no cruell deth : for yf thou wylt doo thus, I thynke he wil giue the pardon of thy life, and mary the to one of the gromes of his kechyn : & yf thou wilt not do thus, know for certaine, y^t to morow nexte comming, this castel shall be rased down to y^e hard earth, and thy selfe brente in a fayre fyre, and the lurdyn that is called Arthur hanged vp by the necke. Than Florence begā to smyle, & said : Syr Jonas, shew vnto your emperour, that, or al this be perfourmed, there shal not abyde one tothe in his heed, but I shal cause them to be rasshed out, eche after other : and as for comyng into my castell ayenst my wyl, lette him knowe well I haue suche people aboute me that shall defende it ryght wel ayenst hym, for therof they be desyrous. Than the dolphyn stepte forthe, as he that was full of yre bycause of the rude wordes y^t Kyng Jonas had

spoken of Florēce and Arthur, and said to the kynge: Thou foule olde churlysshe vilaine! yf thou were not a messenger I wold rashe out thyn eyen out of thyn heed with myne own hādes. What! art thou come hyder to speake vylany to so hie a lady and princesse as Florence is, to saye that she should be giuen to a kechin grome in mariage? Thou olde fole! say vnto thine emperour, that he com to my lady Florence, crepyng on his handes and knees, and to take of suche jugement of death as she wyl assigne him to dye of: and yf he wil not so do, let him flye fast out of this coultre; for as for me, nor none of my company, haue taken no trewse with him; therfore I vtterly defie hym: & fyrst, here before thy face, thou abused folysshe dotarde! I defye the, & al thy malyce.

And whan King Jonas saw the grete peryll & daūger y^t he was in, he was nye for angre out of his wytte, and therwith he set his hande on his swerde: and than Brisebar stepte to him with a grete leuer in his hande, & said: Syr kinge, fayre & softly; not so hardy in thy heed y^t thou ones stere; for, & thou do, thou shalt neuer speke word more with thine emperoure. Than he helde his peas, & stode styll; for he sawe wel y^t yf he had moued, he had bene but dead. Than Brisebar sayd: Yf y^u hast ony more to saye, speke, & auoyde fast out of this presence, yf thou loue thyne own lyfe. Than the Kinge Jonas sayd to the King of Malogre, & to the other lordes of Fraunce & Britayne: Syrs, it is sō, the hie & myghty puyssaunt emperour hath harde spekyng of you, how y^t ye be come hider with moche people in harneys; for what cause he knoweth not, wheder it be to be with him, or ayenst hym: yf it be for him, and that ye wyl com and dwel with him, he wyl gyue you golde & syluer, rentes, & londes, & great possessions: & he wyl loue and honour you in suche wyse, that of reason ye shal holde you ryght wel content. And yf ye be come to be ayenste hym, he wolde know it, to thentent that he wyll take coussaile what he shal do ayenst you: & in this behalfe shew me your myndes.

Than the Kinge Alexander of Malogre spake first, & said: Syr, ye seme to be a wise man, I wote not what I should cal you, for I know not your name: but this I say vnto you, shew vnto your

emperour, that he hath to lytel londe, & is of to smal a power, & hath to lytel store of golde & syluer, to retayne to hys seruice such people as we be: but yf he wil dwel w^t vs, & serue vs truely, let hym come to vs, & we shal do ryght well for hym: & yf he haue no wife, we shal mary him to one of our damoysselles, who hath ben longe one of our lauenders. And whan the Kyng Jonas harde him, that he called hym a wise man, & that he would mary his lorde the emperour to a lewde damoyssel, he was than so angry for despyte, y^t he was nye in a grete rage, & sayd to King Alexander: Syr, ye haue an outragious hart to cal me a wise man, & wold mary my lord to one of your damoysselles, and he is the moste mighty prynce, & moost honoured y^t euer bare crowne of gold on his head: & more ouer ye wold haue hym to come & serue you; therefore, syr, I saye vnto you on hys behalfe, that he shal be to morow assembled ayenst you with xx.m. speres in his company; therefore beware of hym, and of his; for, in his name, I defy you, and all yours. And, syr dolphyn, to you I saye, beware that ye come not ther: for, & ye do, I promyse you to take that head of youre clene fro your sholdres. Than he went to Brisebar, & toke him by the chyn so rudely, that he made al the teth in his head to dashe togyder, and sayd: By the fayth y^t I owe vnto themperour of Ynde, I shal neuer depart out of this countre tyl I haue hanged the by the necke before Arthur & al these Frenshe men that be here present. And whan Brysebar felte hym self so rudely handled, and so churlishely thretned, he strayed his tethe togyder, and frounsed and glared w^t his eyen as though he had ben wode: and therwith he lift vp his leuer, and gaue King Jonas therwith suche a stroke bitwene the sholdres, that he fell flat to the earth: and Brysebar dasht downe with hys knees on hys bely, and wyth a shorte knife he cut of a gret parte of the heere of his berde; wherwith King Jonas braied, and cried out a grete pace. And Duke Philyp did laughe therat, and said: Syrs, beholde what a good barbour Brisebar is! me thynketh he dooth lyue very harde: beholde howe the heres come out, rotes & all. Than Florence rose, and sayd: Frende Brysebar, aryse, and let hym alone, for he is a messenger. Therwith Brisebar departed

fro hym. Than the kynge arose, and went downe the staires al astonyed; & so mounted on his horse, & wente to themperours hoost; & by that time the sonne was farre drawn into the Weste.

And whan themperour sawe Kynge Jonas in y^t case, he demaunded of hym who had arayed him in that wyse? And he answered: Syr, the Frensshe men in the Blaüche Toure hath thus arayed me. And ther he recounted to themperour how y^t they woulde mary hym to one of theyr lauenders, and would haue hym to serue them. - Ye! said themperour, are thei than of that mynde? Than I cōmaūde you, that to morowe nexte ye bete downe this castell; & that the harlot Florence be taken & brēt, & the ribaude Arthur hanged by y^c necke, and al the remnaunt slayne. Thā Kyng Jonas sayd: Syr, I vndertake, on paine of my heed, that all this that ye haue deuysed shal be done to morow betimes. And so he went to hys tent as for that night.

Than the noble knyghtes in the castell went to counseyle, to determin how they should do the nexte daye; for thei knewe well that there sholde be batayle made to them. Than maister Steuen sayd to Kyng Alexander: Syr, I knowe well that thys Kynge Jonas, that lately departed fro vs, wyl make on vs a fyerse assawte to morowe nexte; therefore there is no more to doo, but now let it be seen what Frensshe men can do: & yf we holde them rudely at this beginning, they shal be the lightlier discomfyted here after: nor also thei wil not so lightly agayne assemble ayenst vs: therefore let euery knight shewe forth the best that thei can do, & blessed be he that now shal do valiauntly! Syr, me thinketh that it were best that ye sende for al your people that lyeth without in the tentes, & let them come into the castell as pryuely as they can, without any noyse, & conuai all theyr stuffe w^t them: for now all this night themperours people wil slepe fast, bycause thei thinke to fyght to morow. And whan our people be come into thys castel, let vs all kepe our selfe in our barneys as pryuely as we can, and than we shal let downe the brydges, & set opē the gates; & so in the morning oure enemyes shal thynke that we be all fledde awaye this night for fere; & than I thynke we shal se this King Jonas, and al hys comyany, come & entre into this castell:

& as soone as thei be entred, thā we may stepe to the gate and close it fast; & so thā thei can not escape vs, nor they that be without shal not helpe them: for yf we sholde go and yssue out, & fight in the plaine felde with them al, we should haue ouer moche to doo, & by lykelyhode lese many of our people, for thei be in nombre an hondred ayenst one of vs: & whan we haue slayne al them that shall be entred wythin this castel, than let vs set open the gates, & let the remenaunt entre who wyll: and yf they wyl not come to vs, we may go whā we wil & loke on them in theyr tentes: & the moo that be deed, the fewer enemyes we shal haue.

And whan Florence herde the maisters coūsaile, it pleased her ryght wel, and said, how that she would that they shold do as he had deuised. Madame, sayde Kynge Alexander, youre grace not displeased, we shal not do thus. Ye be doughter vnto a hye and a mighty puissaunt kyng, and I am also a kynge; and it were shame for such people as we be to take our enemyes closed in a nette or cage, for rather we shold go seke them in the open felde with baners dysplayed. Ye say ryght wel, sayd Florence: but, syr, they haue done ayenst me more vylanye and trespace than this case is in; for thei be come hyder into my countre, and hath enclosed me here in my castell withoute ony reasonable cause; wherfore it is no shame to take aduauntage of them if we can. In the name of God, madame, sayde the dolphyn, ye saye but trouth; for it is good polyce in warre to spye auantage on our enemies, so that there be no treason in the case: wherfore let vs doo thus as is deuysed. I am agreed therto, sayde the Duke of Britayne; for tyme ynoughe here after we may issue out on thē: but I promyse you I wyll be the porter, and kepe the gate: and I shall gyue them fre entre, as many as wil come, without ony daunger: but at the goyng out of the tauerne it shall behoue theym to paye for theyr scotte; for suche shal entre y^t shall not fynde agayne theyr goyng oute. Than euery knyght dyd laughe at this newe porter. Than Florence enbraced hym, and sayd: A! myn owne dere lorde and father! it appereth ryght wel how that ye be of the fyersnes of Arthur your sone. And so at the laste they agreed all to thys counsayle.

Than Brisebar mounted on hys horse, and rode forth to the Frenshe hoost without the castell, and came to syr De la Launde, who had the guydynge of them: and they two togyder dyde conuay that same nyght al theyr hoost as couertly as thei coude into the castell, so that none of the emperours people espyed theym: and they within the castel dyd rest them al that nyght tyl that it was nere on the poynt of the daye lyght; than they harde masse, and after that thei ordred al their people: and the Duke of Brytayne and al his company kepte the gate, and entred into the grete sellers and vawtes ioynynge thereto; and kept themselfe priuely and close, without any noyse: and in the market place of the towne was the dolphyn; and in another strete the Erle of Forest and the Erle of Mountbelyall; and in an other corner was y^e Erle of Neuers and the Erle of Foys: and the yong Kyng of Malogres, mayster Steuen, Arthur, Brysebar, and syr De la Launde, accompanied wyth fyue hondred other knightes, kepte the passage to the palays; and Duke Phylp and Duke Hector wer in the palays with Florence. And al these noble men and all theyr company were redy armed, and all closed in chambres, sellers, & vawtes: and so kept themself close without any noyse makynge.

CAP. CIV.

HOW THAT THEMPEROUR AND KYNG JONAS, ACCOMPANYED WYTH FYFTYE THOUSANDE MEN OF WARRE, CAME TO THE CLERE TOURE FOR TO HAUE MADE ASSAUTE THERTO; AND THAN THEI FOUNDE THE GATES OPEN, AND ENTRED BOTHE IN TO THE TOWNE AND IN TO THE CASTELL, FOR THEY THOUGHT VERILY THAT ALL THE FRENSSHE MEN HAD BEN FLEDDE: BUT THEY WERE DECEYUED; FOR THAN THE FRENSSHE MEN LEPT OUT FROM THEYR ENBUSSHEMENTES AND SHETTE FASTE THE GATES, AND THERE SLEWE KYNGE JONAS AND ALL THE FYFTYE THOUSANDE, SOO THAT NONE ESCAPED ALYUE BUT ONE, AND THE EMPEROUR, WHO WAS TAKEN PRYSONER.

IN the morning, whā Kyng Jonas saw the day begyn to spring, he lept out of hys bedde, and made to be cryed thurghout al his host, y^t eueri mā shold to harneis, to y^e entent to make assaut to the Clere Toure. Thā King Jonas assēbled ther togider to the nōbre of xv. thousande persones. Than there came to hym a knight, & said: Syr, Florēce and al the Frenshe men are fledde away this same night priuely, for the gates of the castel and town stondeth wyde opē; & the Frensshe men hath left behynde them moche bagage there, as thei were lodged w^tout the towne. And whan Kyng Jonas hard y^t, he had neuer so great ioye before, and sayd: I knew well that as soone as thei knew y^t I would come ayenst them, they durst not, for theyr lyues, abyde ony lenger. I am angry wyth nothyng but with that Florēce shold thus escape vs. Thā he caused a great horne to be sowned. Than ther assembled about hym on horsebacke wel to the nombre of xl. thousande: & with great noyse of trōpettes, tabors, & hornes, thei rode to themperours tente, who was as then rysen out of his bedde, & stode without his tente w^t great plente of people aboute hym. And as sone as King Jonas saw hym, he alyghted, and sayde: Syr, I am ryght sore displeased, for Florēce & al the galaūtes of

Fraūce are this night priuely fled away. I am sure Arthur hath led them into his countre. But, syr, and it please you, moūt on your horse & go ryde to the castel and take the possession therof, & so shall ye haue the conquest before King Emendus doth come: for whan he is come, ye shal haue a great anaūtage of him: for than he shal be without, & fayne to lodge in the felde; & ye shal be at your ease within the towne & castel.

And whā that themperour harde how that Florēce was escaped fro him, he was nye oute of his mynde for dyspleasure. Than he demaunded for his harneys, and so armed hym, & dyuerse other with hym: so what of his company, and of King Jonas, thei were to the nombre of fyfty thousande. So themperour rode forth with baners dysplayed, & with great noyse of trompettes, hornes, and tabours, and came to the fyrst gate of the castel. Than there the emperour sawe the foundation of the grete walles, the which wer ryght hye & thicke; and the grete and depe dytches ful of water; and the gates rychely buylde, mighty and stronge; & the sharpe cuttinge porte culleses of bright stele: also he behelde the hye and mighty toures pyght full of waueryng fanes. Than he praysed the castel so moche in hys harte, that he would not giue it againe for al the gold of the world. And than he said to Kyng Jonas: Veryly this castel pleaseth me right well: I shal make it my chambre. He sayd trulyer than he was ware of; for there died he in grete myschefe, and was buryed in the castell. Syr, sayd Kyng Jonas, here ye and I wyll take vp our lodgings: & thus oftētimes people speketh of a thing that they knowe but lytle what the conclusyon shall be. Than, by aduenture, as the emperour loked in at a windowe of the chefe toure, he had a blushe of Florēce, for as than he was paste the fyrste gate and warde. Than he sayde to her: A! gentil pusel! make good chere, for verily ye haue themperour to your host. And whā Florence harde him say so, her hart trembled for fere, & said: A! swete loue, Arthur! it is nedeful this day y^t ye be the chefe floure of al other knyghtes! Swete harte! deliuer me this day of this emperour. And by y^t time themperour, wyth all hys l. thousande, were passed the gates & wardes, & were come to the chefe palays, than y^e noble & free

Duke of Britayne rusht out of his enbusshe, & lift vp the bridge, & closed fast y^e gates, and did put out his stādarde ouer the wall of the gate into the castel warde, and caused to be blowen a grisley horne. Than knyghtes lept on horses on euery syde. Than Arthur came down out of the chefe dongeō wel moūted on horsebacke, wel armed, & cried: Brytayne! Saynt Malo! Than he broched to his horse, & w^t greate randon he dressed hym to themperour, & strake hym so rudely with his spere, that he bare downe emperour, horse, & all, in a hepe. Than Arthur had thoughte to haue taken hym; but he myghte not, the prese was soo thicke. And whan Arthur saw that he was holde so short with so grete a nombre, he toke Clarēce, his good swerde, in his hande, and did cut down therwith all that euer he attayned vnto. And whā Kynge Alexander and hys company saw the noble prowesse of Arthur, thei toke on them grete hardines. Than Kynge Alexander ran and encountred Kynge Jonas so rudely, y^t he flewe clene ouer his horse crope, hys legges upwarde: & wyth hys fall he had almost ouerthrowen the dolphyn, who layde on with his swerde as a man out of his wyt. And whan he sawe Kynge Jonas make a forke with his legges vpwarde, he lyfte vp hys swerde & strake him bitwene the legges so rudely, that his ryght legge flewe clene into the felde, and sayd: Go thy waye, thou doting fole! couer thyne arse! shame haue thou! And there this Kynge Jonas was all to troden wyth horse fete. And the emperoure was so brused wyth hys fal, that nye the chyne of his backe was broken asonder, and soo was layde vnder a pyne tree on his shelde, & coude not stere to helpe hym selfe. Than al the erles, and the lorde Beauieu, syr De la Launde, & Brisebar, dasht into the prese, and dyde there suche valyauntnes in armes, that thei dyde, in a maner, with their enemyes as thei list them selfe; for they were nere hande dyscomfyted bycause of faute of their capytaynes: and so than they had thought to haue tourned agayne to the gate; but than the noble Duke of Brytayne was before them, who ryght sharpely receyued them; for the Brytons strake of their heades, armes, & legges: but specially Arthur delte wonders strokes about them, and bette downe all that euer he attayned vnto; so that euery man

fled before hym. To make shorte processe, these noble menne dyde so moche, that all the emperys wer clene discomfyted and slayne: how be it, they endured moche payne and labour fyrste, for they were a great nombre of people; & by that time it was aboute none. Than Arthur and all hys companye vnarmed them, and toke theyr dyner; than they retourned to the palays: and as they went, they sawe lyeng vnder the pyne tree the emperour, who had hys chine sore brused and almoost broken. Than Arthur caused hym to be fayre and easely vnarmed, and made hym to be borne to the palays, & to be layde in a fayre goodly chambre, and appoynted vi. knyghtes to wayte & giue attendaunce on hym, & x. squyers to serue him. Than Arthur caused all the beste surgiens of the cowntre to be brought to him, to hele him of his sore hurtes: and Arthur kept the emperour as honourably as a man ought to kepe suche a persone as he was.

Than Arthur sayd to his company: Lordes! what shall we do w^t yonder grete hoost that is without? for I thynke that yf they ones knowe that themperour be taken, and Kyng Jonas slayne, they wyl flee awaye, and so shal they escape fro vs: therefore let euery man giue hys aduyse what is best ferder to be done. Verely, syr, sayd mayster Steuen, my counsaile is, y^t in the heyght of the hiest toure in thys castel that ye set out themperoures banner displayed, to thentent that they without in the hoost may se it, and than they wyl thinke verely y^t themperour hath wonne thys place, & so than they wyl abide styll and thinke him selfe wel assured: and, syr, as soone as euery man of our companye hath dyned, let vs yssue out wyth baners displayed and fighte with them; for people w^tout a gouernour are halfe discomfyted, for they shall haue noo vertue nor power ayenst vs: and let vs make King Alexander our captayne and gouernour, for a king ought to gouerne an hoost: and than let vs do soo, that Kyng Emendus, whan he cometh, may haue but litel to do. Than euery man sayd howe that the mayster had well aduysed, and agreed al so to do. Than euery man went to dyner: & whan they had dyned, euery man cryed: To harnes! and so armed them. And they without in the hoost were ryght ioyfull whan they sawe theyr lordes baner dys-

played in the toppe of the castel. And than Kynge Alexander and Arthur ordeyned y^t the baner of Britaine sholde be in the way ward, and that Arthur sholde be in y^e company of his fader, the Duke of Britayne; & nexte after him in batayle sholde be the Erle of Mountbelyal, & than the Erle of Neuers, than therle of Foys, & than therle of Forest; next after, the lord Beauieu, & than the dolphin, & than the lorde De la Launde, and syr Brisebar; and than, laste of all, Kynge Alexander, theyr chefe capytayne, and mayster Steuen in his company. And whan all these noble men were thus set in good ordynaunce, & theyr baners dysplayed, than Florence behelde well theyr noble & hie countenaūces, & praysed them mucche in her herte, and sayd: A! gentyl coutry of Fraunce! ryght noble art thou! God kepe the therein, & mayntayn it, sith thou hath nourysshed vp suche a noble company of knightes as here be now at this tyme present. So than there yssued fyrst oute the baner of Britaine wyth the chekered armes, and so al other, euery mā in good ordynaunce. And whan the emperyens sawe them come forth, than they knewe wel howe that themperour & Kynge Jonas were bothe slaine or taken; and than they were so abasshed, y^t they had thought all to haue fledde away. Than Kynge Florypes, broder to themperoure, and Kynge Brandalas, and Kynge Clamados, cosin germayne to Kyng Florypes, mounted al on theyr horses, and rode al about theyr hoost, and dydde encourage theyr people. Than the Kynge Florypes called to him y^e Erle of the Yle Perdue, and cōmaunded him to ryde ayenst the Frenche hoost, & demaūde of theym what people they were, and what they would? and to shew them that yf they demaund batayle, they should haue it on the Mondaye nexte folowynge wythout any fayle, so that they wyll gyue trewe in the meane space. Soo than the erle rode streyght to the Duke of Brytayne, who was in the formest bront, and ryght nobly dyd salute hym. And whan Arthur sawe hym, he made to hym ryghte great ioy. And than the erle desyred hym that he wold cause hym to speke w^t theyr chefe capytayne. Than Arthur brought hym to the presence of Kynge Alexander. Than the erle dyd hys reuerence and saluted hym, and demaunded of the kyng

for what entencyon he and al hys company dyd approche soone nere to the emperours hoost? Certaynely, frende, sayde the kyng, it is so that ye & your company be entred into the londe pertaynyng to the gentyl lady Florence; & ye haue wasted & exyled al her coūtry and subiects wrongfully, & w^tout ani resonable cause; & ye haue besieged & assalted her here in her castell, w^tout any defiaūce made to her before: wherfore we are ridyng in purpose to areyse youre syege, and to dryue you oute of thys coūtrei yf we can. Syr, quod therle, cause your hoost to tary, and returne againe to your castel; and King Floripes, broder to themperour, desireth of you truse and respit of batayle tyl Monday next coming, & than he promyseth you to deliuer you bataile wythout any fayle: for, syr, al oure hoost is sore troubled because of our emperour, for we wote not where he is: for, syr, we se wel y^t the castel is not deliuered too hym, syth we se al you here redy to bataile, and he is abiden behind, and al his: we wote not where to seke hym. Certaynly, syr, quod the kyng, your emperour is within the castel in pryson, and the chine of hys backe nye broke asonder; and as for your King Jonas is dead, and al tho that came with thē: but, syr, as for the respite y^t ye demaūd, I shal take counsaile in y^t behalfe, and than gyue you an answer.

Than the king sent for al his lordes, and shewed them y^e requestes of Kyng Floripes, and desired them to giue him counsaile in y^t behalfe. Than the Duke of Britaine desyred the master to giue fyrst his aduise. Than the master sayd: Lordes! it is of troth, y^t this King Floripes is a cruell prince and greatlye redoubted: for throughout al thēperors londe, the people wyll do more for hym, than for themperour him selfe. And, syrs, ye may wel se before you all the hylles & great valeyes be ful of men of warre, so that for one of our compani there is an C. of theyrs: and also though themperoure were dead, yet these people are not wythout a captayne as long as they haue w^t them thys Kyng Floripes: therefore, my counsaile is, let vs giue them thys truse tyl Monday, syth it cometh of theyr own desyre, for our people are ryghte sor trauayled of the payne y^t they haue had this morning, and theyr horses be also ryghte wery & sore chafed:

and, sir, there be many of our knightes and people sore wounded, so they may wel take their rest the space of these foure dayes, and so by Mondaye euery mā and hors shal be wel refresshed : how be it, on the other syde, I se wel that as now theyr hoost is, in a maner, wythout any ordenaunce, and in great trouble for the myssyng of theyr emperoure ; soo that if we shold go on them at this point, I thynke that we sholde dyscomfyt them al : but we sholde haue no honour in that behalfe, for we should do nothyng but dyscomfite people that were but as halfe dead : therefore let vs accomplish theyr request, and on Monday let vs assemble ayenst them ; and thā, yf God gyue vs the vycory, than our prayse and honour shal be the more greter and more laudable. And whan the mayster had thus deuysed, they were all agreed to hys saying. So than the Kynge Alexander graunted the trewse too the erle tyll the Monday folowyng.

Than the erle returned and sayd to Kynge Florypes, & to suche other as were with hym : Syrs, it is so the Frenche men hath graunted to you trewse tyl Monday nexte ; and as for themperour is in pryson sore wōded, and the King Jonas slain, and al their companye : but of one thyng I ensure you all, sythe God fyrst made mankynd, there was neuer so goodly a sort of men of warre assembled togyther as they bee ; and, as God helpe me, yf we were halfe as many mo people as we be here already, we could not endure ayenst them, they ordre theyr batayles in so goodly a maner. Holde your peace, syr erle, sayd Kyng Florypes, and if ye be aferd flye away ; for, as God helpe me, as soon as Mondy is come, I shall neyther eate nor drynke tyll I haue agayne my broder, themperour, and put them al to deth by the sword. Thā he sent for al the noble men of y^e host, & chefe captaines, and toke their faith and troth to helpe him in his quarell.

Than Kynge Alexander and al his company returned again to the castel, and alighted at y^e gate. And there Florence met thē and cōuaied them vp into the palais : & thā she demaūded theym the cause why they retourned agayne so soone w^tout batayle ? Madam, said the Duke of Britaine, it is so y^t Kynge Florypes hath desyred of vs trewse tyl Monday next comyng ; the which we

haue graunted him. In the name of God, said Florence, so be it. So than euery mā vnarmed thē throughout al the castell; & after they went and visited themperour, & kept him cōpany: how be it, he was sore enpaired because of the hurt y^t he had.

Now let vs leue to speke of thē, and return to Gouvernar y^t was going on message into the realme of Soroloys to Kyng Emendus.

CAP. CV.

HOW GOVERNAR WENT INTO THE RELME OF SOROLOYS, TO
THENTENT TO GIUE KNOWLEGE TO KYNG EMENDUS HOWE Y^t
THEMPEROR HAD BESYEGED HIS DOUGHTER, FLORENCE, IN HER
CASTELL OF CLERE TOURE, DESYRYNGE HYM TOO HAST HYS
HOOST TO RESCOWE HER AT THAT TYME.

WHAN that Gouvernar was departed fro Blaunche Toure, as ye haue herde here afore, he rode so longe tyl at last he ariued at the fayre citie of Palestyne, and there he herde tydyngs of the myghty Kyng Emendus howe y^t he had knowlege that themperour had besyeged his doughter in her castel of Blaunche Toure: wherfore he assembled his hostes togyder as fast as he might, to thentent to rescow Florence, his doughter: and there it was shewed him how y^t the chefe gouernour of hys hoost was the King of Orqueny, who was put to the wayward with xxx. M. hawberts, and after him y^e King of Mormal with other xxx. M. and than the Kynge of Valefound wyth other xxx. M. and than the King of Ismaelyte with other xxx. M. And thā the mighty Kyng Emendus wyth C. M. in his company, and than there were of Duke Philyppes company xv. M. and of the lady Margaretes of Argentons cōpany xv. M. who were brought by syr Emery. And whan Gouvernar herde these tydynges, he was right ioyful, & so moūted on his hors, and rode so long tyl he came within a dayes iourney of the

citye of Cornyte. Than he encoūtrede y^e King of Orqueney's baner wth a right noble company, & so rode forth & passed by al those great routes. At laste he spyed syr Ansell, neuewe to syr Neuelon, Florence marshal; & ech of them embraced other: & so to them there came syr Rowlāde of Bigor, & syr Viceer of Damason, & sir Artaude, & syr Morys of Fenice; & al these wer Florence knights; and al these knew wel Gouvernar, & made to him grete chere. And at last y^e King of Orqueney came to thē, & he embraced Gouvernar, and to hī made right gret fest and chere. Than Gouvernar dyd alyght; but the king made him to remount agayne, & demaunded of him how that Arthur did. Syr, quod Gouvernar, he is at y^e Blaunche Toure; there I left him: & wth him Duke Hector, Brisebar, & master Steuen. Syr, it is so, y^t themperour hath besyeged Florence in the castel, & he hath with hym people without numbre; and he had enclosed the castel rounde aboute or we entred: howe be it, we entred by the subtyl wytte of mayster Steuen: but, syr, I am sure there is, by this tyme, wyth Arthur the most noble company of al the worlde; for he hath brought with him, out of hys country, the Kynge of Malogres, and iiii. erles, and iiii. barons, and also y^e mighty Duke of Britayne, his owne fader, & they are wel to the numbre of xv. thousande knightes of Fraūce of great price and valure: wherfore I think by thys time they haue made some maner of scarmyshe wth their enemies, for they are hardy knyghtes and couragious: for it is gret maruayle yf they lye thus longe styll. Ye! sayd the kyng, is Arthur than of that vertue and strength y^t he hath brought with him suche people? As helpe me God, I am ryght ioyful therof! Now it shall be wel knowen yf he be an orphelyn in his own coutry or not. Syr, sayd Gouvernar, he hertely doth salute you, & desyreth you to haste your people as fast as ye cā toward hym, for the rescowyng of Florence. Wyth a ryght good wyl, sayd the kynge; with Goddes grace we shal be there by Wednesday next comyng at night: let vs go & speke wyth my lorde the Kyng of Soroloys. So they passed forby the gret hostes; and Gouvernar sayde: Beholde! I trowe here be all the world of people. Than muche people demaunded tidings of Arthur, and so did al the

kynges in their owne propre persons: so at last they approached the grete host of Kyng Emendus, and passed forby al the gret routes til they came to Kyng Emendus: and as sone as he saw Gouvernar, his hert reioysed in his body, & embraced him, & demaunded tidinges of Arthur? Syr, sayd Gouvernar, I lefte hym at the Blaūche Toure: & there he recounted to the kyng how y^t they entred into the castell, & shewed him how y^t Arthur had broughte with him, out of his country, the most noble company of al the world, & also his fader, y^e Duke of Britain: and there he shewed the names of them al, both of the king, erles, and barons; wherof the king had gret ioye. Than the Kyng of Orqueneý sayde: Syr, your doughter is not yll bestowed: I thynke he wyl defende her ryght well ayenst themperour. That is true, quod the kinge; but is ther any gret company w^t these noble men? Ye, syr, truly, quod Gouvernar; for, or I departed fro them, they had discomfyted y^e Sowdā, & also his broder, and xxx. M. Sarasyns of his company. That is a gret thing, quod the king. Syr, quod Gouvernar, Arthur desyreth your grace too auauce your host as hastily as ye cā: and now, syr, I wil returne againe to Blaunche Toure, for I thinke long to know the state of my lord Arthur: and so he toke his leue. Go your way, frend, quod the king, and salute fro me my doughter Florence, Arthur, and al suche as be come w^t him, and thank them on my behalfe for coming into this coutry to the ayding of my doughter. Than tharchbisshop embraced Gouvernar: and so Gouvernar departed; and he and y^e King of Orqueneý wente togider to his hoost. And whan syr Ansean of Valefoūd knew y^t Gouvernar wold depart againe, he said to the King of Orqueneý: Syr, my lady Florence is beseged; wherfore I wyl, by your lycence, go w^t Gouvernar, and se my lorde mine vncle who is w^t Arthur. Thā stept forth syr Myles, and syr Rowland of Bygor, & syr Viceer, and syr Artaude & syr Morante, & they al demaunded licence of the kyng to go with Gouvernar; and he gaue them al lycence. Than they toke theyr harnes and mounted on theyr horses, & went forth on theyr way, and passed al y^e hostes.

CAP. CVI.

HOW THAT ARTHUR, ACCOMPANIED WITH THE FRENCH MEN,
DYSCOMFYTED KYNGE FLORYPES, BROTHER TO THEMPEOUR, &
SLEWE AL THEM Y^t WERE IN HIS COMPANY.

So it was, that the nexte day after that the trewe was taken, Arthur rose vp erly in the mornyng, and entred into the palays, and there he found the dolphyn & the lorde De la Laund; and so eche of them did salute other. Than the dolphin said: As helpe me God, it anoyeth me greatly thus long to be closed in mewe! I wold gladly go and sporte me abroad in the felde; but fyrste let vs go take oure harneys wyth vs, because oure enemyes be so nere vs. And so they al iii. did arme them, and Brisebar also, & mounted on theyr horses, and issued out at the gates, and rode downe by a fayre valey by the riuer side, til they wer wel the space of a mile and halfe fro the castel. Thā the dolphin beheld wel the plesant riuer, & the goodly medowes on both sides, and praised muche the countrey in his mind: than he dasht his spores to his horse, and galoped down along by the ryuer syde, tyl he came to a thicke woode: & whan he had thought to haue returned againe, he perceiued a knight, armed, yssuyng out of the same wood, mounted on a good horse, and came rennyng towards him by great randon: and whan the dolphyn saw him, he encountred hym w^t suche force, y^t the knyght brake his spere; but the dolphyn strake hym so rudely, y^t he put his spere through his body, and so the knight fel downe dead. Than Arthur sayde to his company: I se well the dolphyn is a knight of gret valure; and had scant fynysshed hys wordes, but that he perceyued yssuyng out of the wood King Clamados, with ii.C. in harnes w^t hym, comyng ayenst the dolphyn wyth great fiercenes. And whan the dolphin saw y^t, he dasht to his hors, and toke his sword, and strake so the first, that he claue him down to the tethe: than al the remenant ran on him at al sydes: but than Arthur rushte into the prese; and the first that he encoūtered, he

dasht his spere clene throughe hys body so farre, that he wounded an other knyght that was behynd him nye to the deth. Than he drewe out his sworde, and layd on among them that were in hand with the dolphin, and gaue among them so gret strokes, y^t he cut of armes, hedes, and legges, and bet down knightes, and claue asonder sheldes, and made gret place afore him, for none aproched nere hym but that he receiued deth. And also y^e dolphyn dyd as nobly as any knight could do: and Arthur beheld him, and vnder his helme dyde laughe at hys noble valure. Than Brisebar & syr De la Launde dasht into the prese so rudely, y^t eche of them bete downe hys enemy: than they layde on w^t theyr swordes like two wyld lions. And whan y^e Kynge Clamados saw his people so slayne wyth iiii. persons, he was right sorowful & replet w^t yre, and said: If al the other Frenche men be like these iiii., al the world can not endure ayenst them; but, by the fayth that I owe vnto themperour, I shal ryd one of them out of thys mortal lyfe. And therwith he lift vp his sword, and strake Brysebar so rudely, y^t the gentyl knyghte was nye stryken downe, for his hors with the stroke fel down on hys knees: than there fel on him so many folkes, y^t they drew him downe to the earth. And whan the lord De la Laund saw that, he began for to crye as fast as he myght: Helpe, Arthur! for Brisebar is elles lost! Than the dolphyn espyed that, and rushte into the thickest of y^e prese: and he and syr De la Launde dyd as muche as they could to rescowe Brisebar, but it auayled thē not, for there wer to many on him: and so he was taken prisoner, & deliuered to xx. men to kepe: and they led hym forth out of the host ryght rudely, and than vnarmed him, and did bete him right yll. And whan Arthur knewe that Brisebar was taken & led out of the felde, he was righte sorowful and sore displesed: than he dasht into the prese so rudelye, y^t he confounded al that euer he attayned vnto, and claue asonder sheldes, and vnbarred helmes, & unnayled hawbertes, & cut of heades, hādes, and armes, and threw downe knightes, for none abode him wythout deth; so that al fledde before him: and he, and the dolphyn, and syr De la Launde, helde theymselve euer togider in a front.

And all thys season Brysebar was ledde forth out of the felde tyl they came to y^e fote of a gret mountayne, betynge and yll intreatyng of Brysebar theyr prysoner: but it was not longe after tyl they were dyspleased and sorowful, for wythin a lytel whyle after they dranke of the same cup: for Gouvernar, syr Ansel, syr Myles, syr Rowland, syr Vicier, syr Artaude, and sir Morant, the same time descended down thys same mountayne, for they were comyng out of the realme of Sorolois, as ye haue herde here before. And whan that Gouvernar saw those people dele so foule wyth Brisebar, his bloud trembled in his body for fere of Arthur; for than he doubted y^t the Blaunche Toure had ben taken and destroyed, and his lorde Arthur deade. Than he sayd to Rowlande: Saynte Marye! I doubt me greatly of my lord Arthur, for yonder is some of our compani that is taken prysoner: therefore, gentyll knyghtes, helpe to rescowe hym, who soo euer it be. Than Gouvernar rode forth with grete randon; and whan he aproched nere to them, he knewe ryght well how that it was Brisebar y^t was taken prysoner. Than he set his hand on his sword, & laid on amonge them lyke a wolfe among a meyny of shepe, and dydde cut downe and slewe al before him: so within a whyle al tho xx. knyghtes were al slayne. Than Gouvernar came to Brysebar, and sayd: A! frende! it semeth wel this people dyd neuer nourysh you vp, that thus foule & shamefully haue delte w^t you; wherof I am ryght sory: and so loused him out of his bandes. And whan Brysebar sawe hym, he had ryght great ioye, and sayd: A! frende! euer at nede a man shal know his frend; but, for Goddes sake, hast you to helpe my lord Arthur, who is at greate myschyefe here by thys riuer syde; for, as helpe me God, I am more sory for hym than for my selfe. And whan Gouvernar herde that, he galoped forth incontinent, & al hys company after them. And as soone as they came to theyr enemies, they founde the lorde De la Launde ouerthrowen to the erth and takē prisoner, and was leding forth: and therwyth Gouvernar layde on rounde aboute hym, and his company with him; & they bet downe knyghtes on euery syde. Than Gouvernar toke a horse, and deliuered it to syr De la Launde: and, in the spite of al his enemies, he made him to

remoūt. And than Gouvernar went al about sekynge of Arthur, and syr Rowland with him; & at the last they found him in the thyckest of the prese, where as he did maruailes in armes: and the dolphin did helpe hym to the best of hys power. And whan Gouvernar saw hym, he dasht in among thē, and frusshed downe al that euer he attayned vnto; for he was a maruailous good knight, and of gret vertue: and sir Rowlāde and his vi. felowes did helpe them to theyr powers: & Gouvernar wente before, doying great mervayles. And whan Arthur sawe hym, his harte quickened, and toke gret pyte of the payne & labour that he sawe hym take & endure so longe: and therwith he layde on more rudelier than he had done before of al the day: for such was his maner, the more he had to do, the more grew euer his strength & hardines. Than came in Brysebar, well armed, and horsed, for he had bene before at a good market, where as he had choyse of the best; & he bare downe his enemyes before him by grete hepes.

And whan King Clamados saw so his people dyscomfyted, he tourned hymselfe to flye, & sayd to a knyght that was by him: Go and hast you to themperours hoost, & bryng with you iiij.C. hawbertes to socour me. And so the knyghte rode as faste as he myghte tyl he came to Kyng Florypes & to King Brandolyn, who were sekynge all about the hoost for Kyng Clamados, but they coude here nothyng of hym; wherwyth they were gretely dyspleased: and at last the knyght messenger came to them, and sayde to Kyng Florypes: Gentyll kynge, haste you to socour the noble Kinge Clamados, who is yonder by the ryuer syde; and he & his company are fighting with x. Frenshemen, who I thynke are out of theyr myndes: I beleue thei be not erthly people, but rather fendes of hell, who are come for to destroy vs all: for I am sure they haue slayne, by this time, nye ii. hondred of the best knyghtes of Kyng Clamados: and, syr, King Clamados his selfe is wounded in v. places of his body; and without ye haste you the faster, he is but eyther dead or takē. Saynt Mary! frende, sayd King Florypes, and howe is it they haue not slayne all these Frenshe men, sith thei be but x. persones? Slayne! syr, sayd the knyght, nay speke not therof: but, sir, pray to God to kepe you

fro myschyefe, & that they approche not to nere you whan ye shal medle with them, for ther is none that approcheth to them without death. Syr, hast you, or els ye wyl lese your good Kyng Clamados. Than Kynge Florypes commaunded a great grisley horne to be blowen: than all the hoost armed theym hastely, & mounted on theyr horses, & toke theyr speres & sheldes; and made so great bruyte & noyse, that Duke Phylp, as he was in the castel, herd thē; and loked out at a wyndow, and sawe all the hoost armyng them, & moūting on their horses. And than it was shewed hym, how that Arthur, & the dolphyn, syr De la Launde, & syr Brysebar, were yssued out of the castel all armed, and were riden downe by the ryuer syde. And whan he saw al the people of the hoost drawynge thyderwarde, he thought wel that ther was some fray towarde, wherfore he feared gretly of Arthur & his companye. Than he caused the gret watche horne of the castel to be blowen iii. times, so y^t it was herd throughout the towne and castel: whereby euery mā knew wel that ther was some newe tydynges; wherfore thei armed them, and moūted on theyr horses. And than al the erles, lordes, & knightes, did arme them, and so mounted on their horses, sauynge the Duke of Brytayne, King Alexander, and the mayster, who as than were not risen out of theyr beddes: & al these lordes & knightes, with baners dysplayed, yssued oute of the castel; & thei wer well to the nombre of xv. thousande, in iiii. batayles, wel renged, & in goode ordre: & they rode downe alonge by the ryuer syde, & Duke Phylp rode formest, tyll at laste he met wyth the fyrst company of the emperours hoost; & they encoūtered rudely togider: & so both partyes euer encreased, so that ther was bytwene them a great mortal batayle and a fyerse: themperiens were xl. thousande, and the other parte were but xv. thousande: how be it, thei slew many of their enemyes: & Kyng Brandalyn was chiefe gouernour of themperours hooste. And in this meane season Arthur & hys ix. felawes did so moch, that thei clene dyscomfyted al King Clamados company. Than Kynge Clamados was right sore displeased, & ran at Arthur, & strake hym on the whyte shelde, for he thought y^t he wolde set lytle by al his losse, so y^t he might ouercome him;

but the stroke reboūded again w^out doyn^g of ony hurtē, for the shelde was to harde for hym to enpayre it : and whan the kyng saw y^t, he was nye wode for angre, & therwith gaue Arthur another grete stroke ; but al auayled hym nothyng. Than Arthur strake at the kynge, who was aferd of the stroke, & thought to step a lytle a syde : but it was late, for Arthur light so on hym, that he claue his shelde clene asonder in the middes, & the stroke entred into his sholdre, and strake clene of the arme from his body : & as the swerde dyd glent down, it share also clene away the calfe of his legge. And whan the kynge saw that he was so sore woūded, he turned hym, & flewe away as fast as he myght, and x. other wyth hym, for ther were no mo lefte alyue of hys ii.C. men, and yet they were all maymed & hurte. Than Kyng Clamados fledde til he came to the remenaunt of themperours hoost, wher as he founde Kyng Florypes ; and there he fell down before hym, & sayde : A ! gentle kyng ! why do ye tary thus long, y^t ye take not vengeaunce on these Frenshe glotons, who haue thus araied me ? Wherefore, kyng, hast you, & socour our people. And whan Kyng Florypes saw hym in that case, he was right sorowful, & sware a grete othe, & sayd, that he would neuer ete tyl he had the hedes of them that had thus yll arayed hym, & brokē the trewse. Than he cōmaunded hornes & trompettes to be blowen, soo that euery man wythin the hoost dyde arme them, & mounted on theyr horses, & made grete noyse & bruite ; so that the Duke of Brytaine, as he was in his chambre within the castel, harde well the great noyse. And thā he demaūded of his seruaūtes what it might be ? Sir, as God helpe vs, it is our company that are fyghtyng without in the felde wyth the emperours hoost ; for, syr, al the lordes of this castel are issued out, sauing you, and Kyng Alexander, who I thynke be yet in his bedde. Saynt Mary ! sayd the duke, & is not my baner there among them ? No, syr, truely, nor none of your men. And, quod the duke, I lese myne honour thys daye : gete me my harneys : and so hastily he armed him. And thā he entred into the chābre whēre as Kyng Alexander was, & recounted to hym all this matter. Than the kyng was right sory y^t he was not gone forth with the hoost : so thā he armed him, and al his, and

moūted on theyr horses : and soo in good ordinaunce they yssued out, with baners dysplaied, and rushte in to the batayle to helpe their company. And whan Arthur & his ix. felawes had dyscomfytēd clene Kyng Clamados and hys company, he wend ther had ben no more to do at that tyme : & so than he demaunded yf ony of his cōpany wer hurte or sore wounded. And they all sayd, that, blessed be God, ther was none of thē that had ony great hurte. And therwyth they harde great noyse, and dashyng togider with speres and swerdes, and harde crynge : Brytayne ! Wel, sayd Arthur, I beleue that our company of the castel be fyghtyng with the hoost without ; wherfore let vs go helpe them.

And by that time thei had rydden a lytle waye forthe, thei saw where as the batayle was right fyerse & cruel. Than Brysebar espyed where as King Floripes came towarde them with an hondred thousande men ; and so shewed theym to Arthur, and sayd : Gentyll knyght, and noble lorde, and our chefe souerayne lord ! nowe is it nedefull that ye shewe your noble valure in this iourney ; for, syr, beholde yonder cometh King Florypes with al the world of men after him. A ! noble Kynge Emendus ! how is it that ye come not to socoure this noble company ? Frende, sayde Gouvernar, be ye in certayne that ye shall haue by hym shortely noble helpe & socoure : let vs leue our talkyng, & goo on our enemyes ; for, as God helpe me, I shall ones go throughe them, or elles I shal lye on the groude in quarel, for I doubte no deth. Well, syrs, sayde Arthur, doubte not for al the worlde as longe as I lyue : but, syrs, holde you euer close nere me, for I promyse you ye shall se me ouerthrow so many knightes, y^t it shal be paine for you to nombre them : let vs go on them, for we tary to longe. Sir, sayd the dolphyn, doubte ye not of vs, for as longe as we lyue we shal neuer fayle you. Therwith they dasht into the prese, & ouerthrew knightes by grete hepes ; but specyally Arthur dyde wondersly, for he was thā as freshe as though he had done nothyng of al the daye before.

Thus we wyl leue them fyghting, and retourne to mayster Steuen in the castel, who knew nothing of all this mater.

CAP. CVII.

HOW MAYSTER STEUEN, BY HIS ART & CONNING, CAUSED THEM-
PERYENS TO GO A WRONGE WAYE FROM ARTHUR, AND SO
ENCOUNTRED Y^e KYNGE EMENDUS & AL HIS HOOST.

So it was, y^t whan mayster Steuen had layē in his bed as longe as it pleased him, than he arose & wēt into the hal, and there he foude Florence & the lady Margarete: and than he had grete maruayle that he saw no body elles, and demaunded of them wher as al the noble cōpany were become? And Florence answered him, and sayde: A! gentyll mayster! now is suche besynes com, that we haue grete nede of your helpe; for Arthur & al our company are without, fightinge with themperours hoost, who are an hondred thousande, & our cōpany are but xviii. thousand: and also, more ouer, Kyng Florypes is coming on them with an other C. thousande: wherefore, by all lykelyhode, our people shall be destroyed: wherfore, gentil mayster, as ye be sone to a kyng, helpe nowe our noble chyualry by your clergy.

And whan the mayster harde these tidinges, he went to his chābre & toke his bokes, & dyde so moche by his connyng, that he raysed a grete myste in King Florypes hoost, soo y^t eche of thē coude scāt se other: wherby thei lost their bye way to come on Arthur & his company, & toke the streyght waye y^t the King of Orqueny & the gret hoost of y^e mighty Kyng Emendus was coming, & or they wyst their horses were nere togider. Thā the King of Orqueneys hooste spyed and knew wel, by theyr baners & standardes, y^t they were of their enemyes. Than they ran to theyr harneys, & saddled theyr horses & mounted on them. And the good Kyng of Orqueny was clene armed, & wel moūted on a grete mightye horse, & rode formest of all his company, the whiche was well to the nombre of xxx. M. And next after hym came the Kyng of Mormall w^t other xxx. M. And whan they were nere to theyr enemies, than the King of Orqueny ranne ayenst Kyng

Brandalin, who brake his spere al to peces : but the noble Kinge of Orqueney strake him so rudely, y^t he fell ouer his horse crope, his legges vpward, so that he lay a gret space for dead on the erth : but at last he was rescowed by his people. Thā begā the batayle right cruel & fyerse on both parties ; & the Kyng of Orqueney & the Kyng of Mormall dyde ryght valiauntly.

Now let vs retourne to maister Steuē, who after that he wēt out of his chābre, & had caused this great myst to be in thēperours hoost, he armed him and went down into the court of the palays, and ther he foude redy a great & a myghty blacke horse, w^t rede eyen sparkelyng as fyre ; the whych horse had neuer eten pro-uendre, & was bare on al iiii. fete, for he was neuer shode. And thā the maister incontinent mouēd on hym. And as sone as y^r maister was on his backe, he sodeinly vanysshed away ; so y^r Florence, nor none that wer w^t her, wyst wher he was become ; & so sodenly he was borne into the hoost where as Arthur was fighting w^t his enemyes. And as soone as the mayster was there, he blew such a blast, that ther rose in suche a wynde & storme in themperours hoost, y^t thei lost therby halfe their strength & hardines. Than the mayster w^t his swerd in his hand dasht into y^r prese, & gaue many grete strokes : but his hors w^t his fete, both before and behinde, gaue suche strokes, that he ouerthrewe whosoener he touched ; so y^t ther was none that approched nere him, but y^t the horse wold ren on him with open mouth & deuoure hym : so y^t euery mā fled away before the mayster, for fere of his horse : the horse wolde ioyne togyder his fete & lepe into the myddes of the prese, & there he wold laye on with his fete, both before & behinde, & byte with his tethe ; so that he claue asonder sheldes, & brast asōder helmes, so that none durst abyde hym. And Arthur, & his cōpany, whan they saw the mayster & hys horse, they laughed at hym a grete pace. Than the iiii. erles & the Britōs made place before them ; & specyally Arthur aboue all other dyd meruailes in armes. And at conclusyon they dyd so moche, that theyr enemyes fledde before them ; & thei folowed after them and slewe so many of thē, that thei were all clene dyscomfyted, for they sawe well thei had no socour, & had great

maruaile wher the King Florypes w^t his hoost was become, that he cam not to socour them. Thā Arthur caused a gret horne to be blowē, and railed togider his people about Kyng Alexander, and so than toke counsayle to retourne againe to the Blaūche Toure. Than thei saw the maister coming to them fro the hye mountayne on his horse, brayeng lyke the wynde. And whan he was come to them, he sayd: Syrs, now quyte your selfe wel, & shew that ye be noble men come out of the gentil countre of Fraūce: for it is so, y^t the noble Kyng of Orqueney & the Kyng of Mormall are beyonde yonder moūtayne fyghtinge w^t Kyng Floripes, & they are but xl. thousād ayenst an C. thousāde: wherfore they are sore ouermatched: for Goddes sake let vs go and socour them! And whan Arthur harde that, he was as fyerse of harte as a raged lyon, and said to Kynge Alexander: Gentyl kynge! let vs go shortly and helpe these gracious kynges: certaynly I had rather dye thā thei shold suffre ony hurt: one of thē is cosyn germaine to the faire Florēce. Certainli, frende Arthur! said the kyng, I am content with al my hart. Thā they rayled theyr people togyther, and wente forthe wyth good ordynaūce, and baners displayed; & suche as wer wounded & hurte retourned to the Blaūche Toure. And so thei rode forth suche waye as the mayster ledde them, tyl at laste they came to the bataile. Than the maister dasht his spores to his horse & rusht into the host. Than his horse began to fyght wyth hys fete, & to byte with his teth. Than Arthur & his company dyd laughe at hym. Than Arthur, Duke Philip, & Gouvernar, dashte into the prese: & the fyrst that Arthur encoūtreth withall he strake hym so rudely, that he claue hym to the sholdres; & fro an other he toke his head: & so he layd on rounde about him, and confoūded al that euer he attayned vnto. Thā y^e good Kyng Alexander, and the noble Duke of Britaine, and all other lordes, rusht into the prese. Than there began a fyerse batayle. And whan the dolphyn sawe the noblenes of Arthur & his company, he toke on hym therby great hardines. Than he broched his horse with the spores, & dasht into y^e prese, & hys enemyes assayled hym on all partes: but he defended hym lyke a good knyght: but there were soo many ayenst hym, that thei slew his

horse vnder him. Than he lepte on his fete, & slewe & draue downe many knyghtes with his swerde; but at last, for all that euer he coude do, he was taken prysoner. And whan Gouvernar saw that, he dasht into the prese, and the fyrst that he encountred he claue him to the teth; & fro another he strake of the arme harde by the sholdre: & soo layde on rounde aboute hym: & after hym wente syr Neuelon, & syr Rowlande of Bygor, & dyd ryght valyauntly; but ther were on them mo than xl., and they helde them so shorte, y^t thei coude not ayde the dolphin. And whā syr Brisebar saw his company in that case, than he went into the prese, & closed hym selfe iuste to Gouvernar, & bytwene them thei slew many of their enemyes: for they kepte them so close togyder, that no man coude part them. At last mayster Steuen sawe them in that case; he rusht in wyth his horse, and dyd suche wonder, what wyth hys handes & w^t his horse, that his enemies fledde fro his strokes, & said: Shame haue suche jogeler y^t hath taught his horse thus to daunce! Let vs flye fro this feest. Shame haue he that gyueth hym ony thyng! We are but dead and we abyde hym; therefore let vs leue hym: hāged may he be that brought him into this coultre! Therwith thei departed, and fledde away fro the dolphyn. Than our knyghtes came again to the dolphin, and caused him again to mouēt on a good horse, and dyd put them selfe agayne into the batayle. Than syr Ansell strake so rudely a knight, y^t he fell down starke dead. And whan Kynge Brandalyn saw y^t, he was right sore displeased, & strake sir Ansell so rudely, that he put his swerde clene throughout his body more thā a spā: therwith the gentyl knyght fell down to the erth ryght dolorously hurt and wōded. And whā Duke Hector saw that, he was ryght sore displeased, for he wend he had ben dead. Than he ran at King Brādalyn, and strake him with his swerd so vertuously, that he made his head to flye to the erth, and said: A! vnhappy king! thou haste taken fro vs a right noble knyghte, but now thou hast paied for the mēdes: therfore I clayme the as quyte. Than the King of Orqueny, who had wel seen Hector do that deed, he said: A! gentle knyghte! blessyd be that wombe that bare the; for verily ye can wel reuenge your frende. Than ther began grete

sorow in themperours hoost for Kyng Brandalyn. Than moche people of them drewe togider to bere the dead king out of the batayle. And Arthur caused syr Ansell to be borne to the Blaūche Toure to Florence, and ther his woūdes to be serched. And whan Kynge Florypes harde tidynges that Kynge Brandalin was slayne, and sawe his people so slayne and wounded, he was for sorowe and angre nye out of his mynd : & therewyth he ranne at a knyght of the Kynge of Mormalles with a greate spere, & persed him therewith clene thughout the body, and soo he fell downe dead ; and wyth his swerde he strake the head of an other ; and the thyrd he rydde out of hys lyfe. And whan the gentyl Kyng of Mormal sawe hys people so slayne, he ranne at Kyng Floripes, and gaue hym a grete stroke on the shelde, but the stroke dyde hym but lytle hurte ; but than the Kynge Florypes gaue hym suche a stroke, that he claue his sholdre downe to the sadell, and therwith he fell downe dead. Thā began there a great sorow among his company, for he was a ryght noble and gentyll kynge. And whan Arthur sawe that, he was neuer so sorowful before for any thyng that euer came vnto hym before : therwith, in a great rage, he began to florysshe with Clarence, his good swerd, and gaue Kynge Florypes suche a stroke on hye on the helme, that he claue him clene asonder downe to the sadel, so that he fell asondre in two partes. And whan his people saw that, thei were so abasshed, that they had noo power lenger to defende them selfe but lytle : so than Arthur and Hector slewe of them euen as thei lyst : soo thus thei were clene dyscōfyted : and so they fledde away and saued them selfe as wel as they might.

Than the gentil Kyng of Orqueney cam to the place wher as the dead bodye of the noble Kynge of Mormal laye, and wept for sorowe, and said : Certainly my hart is heuy for youre death. A ! gentyl, noble Kyng of Mormal ! this warre was euyl begon for you. All trouth, bounte, and beaute, was in you ! Certaynly he had a harde hart that thus slewe you. Therwith he alyghted fro hys horse. Than Kynge Alexander cam to him, and al the other dukes, erles, barōs, and noble knyghtes, and thei all made ryght grete sorowe. Than they dressed forth the dead body, and did

sende it to the Blaūche Toure. And whan Florence harde of the great sorowe that they made, she was in great fere of Arthur; and the lady Margarete had greate doubte of the mayster; tyll at laste she was encertayned that it was for the death of the Kyng of Mormall: wherof she was ryght sorowful, and caused the dead body ryally to be layde on a ryche bere, in the myddes of the quere of the chirche.

Than the Kyng of Orqueney sent to the myghty Kyng Emendus iiii. knyghtes in message, certyfyenge hym, how that they haue had a great bataile, wherin the good Kyng of Mormall was slayne; and of themperours parte, howe that Kyng Brandalyn, King Clamados, and Kyng Floripes, be al thre slayne, and the Erle of the Yle Perdue taken prysoner, & maymed for euer. So than these messengers departed. And than the Kyng of Orqueney caused his tent to be pyght vp a lytle besyde where as the batayle was, ther to abyde the coming of King Emēdus; and kept styll in his company the King Alexander of Malogre; & the Duke of Brytaine, and the other erles & barons, retourned to the Blaūche Toure, to kepe it, and to bere company with Florence.

CAP. CVIII.

HOW THAT THEMPEROUR DYED IN PRISON FOR SOROW, WHAN
THAT HE KNEWE THAT HYS KYNGES AND PEOPLE WERE AL
SLAYNE & DYSCOMFYTED.

So it was, that whan the Kyng of Mormalles body was brought into the church within the castel, there was made right gret sorow in al the cytie and castel, in so muche that themperoure, as he lay in hys bed sore sycke, for he enpayred euery day more and more, & as he lay he herd the gret sorow y^t was made w^out in the castel. Than he demaunded what it was? and wherfore that gret bruyte without was made? And than it was shewed hī how that it

was because of the deth of y^e King of Mormal, who was slain by King Floripes. Ye! sayd themperor, & how doth King Florypes? I charge you tell me the trouth. Syr, for Goddes sake enquire noo more of that matter tyl ye be perfite hole. I wyl not, sayd themperour, I wyl know it: but than he said to a subiect of his own that was there with him, I charge the to tel me the plain troth. Syr, sith it plese you, I shal tel you the playne troth: it is so, indede al your people are destroyed, & your broder, Kyng Floripes, and al your other kynges, are al slayne. And whan themperour herd that, he had so gret sorow, that he closed his tethe togyder, and caste hys handes abrode: and therwith his hert did ryue asonder, and so dyed for sorowe. And than suche as were about him did cast out a great crye. Than Florence and the Duke of Britaine went into the same chaumbre, and there they found themperour ded. Thā the Duke of Britaine sent for King Alexander, and the King of Orqueney, and for all the other lordes and barons. And whan they were al togyder, than they aparailed the emperours body, and conuayed it to churche, and laid him by the Kyng of Mormal: and also thider was brought the body of Kyng Florypes, and laid by them. Than incontynent there wente a messenger to Kyng Emendus; & by that tyme the fyrst messengers were come to King Emēdus, & said to him: Syr, themperor is in pryson, and al his hostes discomfited, & al his kinges dead and slain. Thā the king demaunded whoo had done those noble dedes? Syr, said he, as God helpe vs, y^t hath done such knightes as Arthur hath brought w^t him; for, syr, in al your lyfe you neuer saw such knightes, nor more to be doubted: there is nothing that can endure ayenst them: but, syr, al the world speketh of Arthur, & his cosyn Hector; for Arthur al onely by hys noble prowes hath made an ende of all his enemies: how be it, syr, ther is one grete mischefe fallen vnto your grace; for the good Kyng of Mormal is slayne by Kyng Florypes; but incontynent Arthur slew hī, and claue him asonder in ii. peces. And whā King Emendus herd of the deth of his good kyng, he could speke no worde of a gret space: and whan he might speke, he sayd: A! gentyl knightes hert, true and honorable to al people! alas! that I

haue thus lost you, certesly it forthinketh me. A! emperour! shame haue you, siȝh ye haue taken fro me my noble & true companiō! Certesly I shal take vengeaunce on you as sone as I shal se you. And as he was thus talkyng, there came to hym the last messenger, and said: Syr, y^e King of Orqueni doth acertayne you that themperour is dead. And how is he dead? quod the kyng. Certaynly, syr, quod the knight, whan he herd of the deth of his broder, Kyng Floripes, and of his other kings, and that his host was clene discomfyted, he dyed for sorowe, as he that was sore sick before, becaus of his hurt that he had in hys backe. Wel, quod the kyng, than I am reuenged on him for mi kyng: how be it, I would he were alyue again, and al his, so that I had again my good Kyng of Mormal. Go your waye again, quod the king: go to the King of Orqueni, and say, that I desyre him to ordeyne redy to be buryed the bodyes of themperour, & of my Kinge of Mormall, of Kyng Florypes, of King Brandalin, and of King Clamados; and shew him how that I wyl be to morowe next commyng w^t him there, to do the obseruaunce of theyr buryinge. Than the kyng sayd to his broder, the archbisshop: Fayre broder! go to the Blaunche Toure and aparaile right hyely for the burying of these kynges accordyng to theyr estates; and your self this night say y^e obseruaunce y^t belongeth to theyr obsequies; and, by Goddes licence, I shall be there to morow by masse time. Syr, said y^e bysshop, I shal fulfyl your commaundement with a right good wyl: and so he departed & went to the Blaunche Toure. And than Florence came to hī, and said: Mine own good vncle and frend! ye be right hertely welcō. Than the King of Orquene, and King Alexander, and al other erles and barons, welcomed hym. And whan he was chaunged, he, and al his, gadered together and went to churche, & there the bysshop did all the obseruaūce & al the ceremonies: and there was ordeined v. rich beeres, and v. ryche crownes of golde hanging ouer them, w^t baners and cote armures, beten wyth the colours of theyr armes. And whan the byshop had done al the seruice ouer the bodyes, than they al returned againe to the palays, and so rested them tyl the next daye.

CAP. CIX.

HOW THAT KING EMENDUS CAME TO THE BLAUNCHE TOURE, WITH
AL HIS NOBLE COMPANY, TO THE BURYING OF THEMPEROUR
AND OF THE OTHER IIII. KYNGES.

THE next day betimes King Emēdus and al his hoost mounted on their horses, & toke the way to the Blaunche Toure, and comaunded that all his host shold go in good ordynaunce as they were wont to do, w^t baners and stādardes displaied, as though they shold entre into bataile, if nede were. And than he sent for the King of Orqueny to y^e Blaūche Toure, and for al his host. And as soone as the King of Orqueny knew of the King Emendus plesure, he departed fro y^e Blaūch Toure and went to the king. Than incontinent the king cōmaunded him, y^t he shold arme him and al his; for he said he wold y^t the Frenche men shold se the fiercenes of his power. So than the King of Orqueny and his company went into the first tide; and in this maner the Kinge Emendus came towarde the Blaunche Toure lyke a mighty puissant king, to thentent that he shold be the more praised of the French lordes: and there was lening at a window of the castel, Florēce, King Alexander, the archbyshop, and the Duke of Brittain, togyther, euer loking for the comyng of King Emendus. And at theyr windowes there stooode Arthur, Hector, Duke Phylip, and the iiii. earles, and iiii. barons, & the dolphin, and the Marshal of Myrpoys, and al the other knightes of Fraunce. And at last they saw comyng downe a great hyl, the baner of Orqueny waueryng wyth the wynd, beryng therein a felde of gouldes enrayled wyth azure; a barre of goulde with a lion rampaūt, golde: and thā they hearde trompettes, hornes, and taboures, blowing merely: thā they saw crosbowes and moryspykes on fote to a great numbrey; and knightes on horsbacke wel reinged and in good ordinaunce, w^t many stādardes and gysernes waueryng wyth the wynd; gret horses braying and beting with theyr

fete; sheldes and helmes shynynge ayenst the sonne. And than nexte after came the host of the good Kyng of Mormal, weping and making gret sorow, w^tout any baner, sauing a lytel giserne of sendal of black colour: and euery knight of y^t company bare theyr speres the hedes downward, and the smal end of their sheldes vpward. And whan the archbyssshop saw them coming in y^t maner, he had so gret pitie, yt he wept for sorow; and Florence also could not kepe her selfe fro wepyng: and al other had gret pitie of y^t company; for it semed wel to them y^t they wer right sorowful and w^tout a lord. And after these people came the King of Ismaelites host w^t his baner displayed, wherin was beten a libard passant, azure crowned w^t gold, barred w^t floure de lyces, syluer: their people were of a fierce countenaunce, and made great bruite w^t hornes and tabours, and they rode in good ordinaunce, wel renged in batayl. After them came the baner of Argentō, bering a felde of azure, a knight armed, gold, on a hors, siluer, and syr Emery was chefe leder of y^t cōpany. And as sone as the lady Margaret saw her baner, she said to Florence: Madam, my people haue not yet forgotten you. As God helpe me, fayre lady, quod Florence, they be ryght goodly to behold, and semeth wel to be people to gyue ryghte good aide. And as they loked ferder, they saw where syr Clemenson came ryding w^t Duke Philippes baner, bering golde & grene medled togider, poudred w^t roses, azure. Than Duke Philyp saide: Yonder I se my baner. Verely, quod King Alexander, right gret and mighty is that king y^t may haue suche people at his comaundement. Than they saw where came the baner of y^e King of Valefound, fader to mayster Steuen, & he bare a felde vert with crownes, golde, and chaplettes, silver. And last of al there came the ryche baner of Kyng Emendus, wherein was a great flambyng dragon; and than there came so muche people, y^t al the erth was couered w^t them; and ther were so many standardes and tokens, y^t a man might say that al the world was coming. Than King Alexander & his company said, Where was al this people found that belongeth to this kinge? it semeth he hath brought al the worlde w^t him. Than Florence said to Kinge Alex-

ander: Syr, me thinketh it wer well done y^t ye and youre company did mount on your horses & go and mete my lord & fader: Syr, he wil take it for a gret honor and loue. As God help me, madam, quod the king, ye haue said lyke a noble lady ought to say, & so shal we do.

Than mounted the king, and al other erles, barons, and knightes, without any harnes. Than King Alexander and the Duke of Britain rode togither, & tharchbishop and Arthur, & so al other lordes, ii. and ii. togither: and they were so goodly to behold, y^t euery man had maruayle of them. And so they passed by al the companyes tyl they came to King Emēdus, who receiued thē al right swetely, and thanked them gretli of the gret ayde y^t they had done to Florence, his doughter. Than King Alexander rode on the ouer side of King Emendus, & the Duke of Britaine on the other side; and soo they rode forthe tyll they came to the Blaunche Toure, & there they alighted. Than Florence came to y^e king, her fader, & eche of thē enbraced other: and the kyng sayd: Fair doughter! ye haue a good lord, that so gentil a cōpany hath brought w^t him out of his country; & I se wel ye be ful wel bestowed. Than King Emēdus toke y^e Duke of Britain by the hand, & so they ii. wente togider to church, & there was done the seruice for themperour & for the other kinges ful solempnly, & there they were entered w^t gret honor: & after that, Arthur caused a fayre church to be edified in the same place where as the good King of Mormall was slayne, & there he founded a lodge of xl. chanons, and eche of thē to haue iii.C. marke of yerely rent. And whan al these foresayd obseruaunce was done, y^t King Emēdus cōmaunded y^t al his tentes and paulyons shold be pight vp w^tout the castell, the which was done incontynent; & theyr diner was puruaied for in the same place: and the King Emendus, and King Alexander, and y^e Duke of Britaine, sat them doune togider at one table, and al other kinges and princes sat downe at an other table, euery mā after his estate; and so there they were serued right richly: and Florence remained stil in the castel, and her vncl, the archebishop, Duke Philip, and the master, wer with her. And whan King Emendus

had dyned, he called to him Arthur, & sayde: Arthur, ye haue won on these emperiens great tresure & riches, wherfore cause thē to be gadered togider, and depart them amonge your knyghtes where as it shall plesse you best, and there as ye shal thynk them wel employed. My lord, said Arthur, w^t a right good wyll: and so than Arthur departed suche riches as was won in the felde in such wise, y^t euery man helde him selfe wel content: & euery man saide: Noble knight Arthur! God encrease your bounte & honour, and God giue you good life, for we haue a rich & a noble lord of you.

Than Florence & the bishop came out of the castel to the kinges tent; and as sone as King Alexander saw her, he rose vp on his fete and put of his cap, and brought her to her fader. Than the king, her fader, toke her by y^e hand and set her downe by him, and sayd: Fayre doughter! we haue bene righte sore displeased for the deth of your people; therefore it is now time y^t ye reioyce vs, as in taking of Arthur to your lord & husbond, for we be accorded therto: and I wyl y^t ye shal go to Sabary, & there ye shal be wedded. Syr, said Florence, al shall be at youre pleasure: how be it, syr, if it plesse your grace, I wil fyrst go to the Porte Noyre, for there is the Duches of Britain, moder to Arthur, and al these other ladies, wyues to these noble lordes y^t be here come w^t Arthur; &, sir, I shal bringe them into this countrey, and do them suche honor as I can, as I thinke they wil do to me if I wer in their country. And whan the kinge her father herd that, he smiled, and said: Faire doughter Florence! it pleseth me ryght well; go your way to morow, and the Kyng of Orqueney, Duke Philip, and Arthur, shal go with you: and for the loue of them, I shal mete with you and them at Argence.

And whan the lady Margarete herd that the kyng wold go to Argence, she sent hastely syr Emerye to apparayle her palays, to receyue the kyng and hys company ryght honourably, and gaue lycence too her hoost to returne home: so they were all that day in great ioy and sport, & bare great honour to King Emendus, and to al his. Thus they passed forth this nyght.

CAP. CX.

HOW AFTER THE DYSCOMFITURE OF THEMPEOUR AND AL HIS PEOPLE, Y^e KING GAUE LYCENCE TO AL HIS HOOST TO DEPART EUERYE MAN HOME, & WENT HIM SELFE TO ARGENCE, THERE TOO MAKE THE WEDDYNG BETWENE ARTHUR AND FLORENCE; AND HOW THAT FLORENCE WENT TO THE PORTE NOYRE TO MAKE CHERE TO THE DUCHES OF BRITAINE, AND TO THE OTHER LADYES, & TO BRINGE THEM TO ARGENCE TO HER FADER, KYNG EMENDUS.

IN the next morning y^e Kyng Emendus rose, & gaue licēce to al his host to depart: & he put him self forward on his iourney toward Argence, & toke wth him King Alexander, & the Duke of Britayne, & al the other earles and barons, & brought them throughout dyuers of his cities and castels, and made them righte gret chere and fest; & also Florence rose y^e same daye betymes, and entred into her chariot, and toke with her the Quene of Orqueny and the fayre lady Margaret; and after her there were other iii. charyots ful of fayre ladies and damosels; & Gouvernar and syr Neuclō were chiefe rulers of her houshold; and the Kyng of Orqueney, Duke Philip, Arthur, and the master, kepte her company, and soo rode forthe togyder tyl they came to the Porte Noyre. Than Arthur, Brisebar, and Clemenson, were sente somewhat before, to shew the duches of the comyng of the fayre ladye Florence, doughter to the mighty Emendus, King of Soroloys, and to make purueyaunce for her comyng: soo they rode forth so farre, tyl at the last on a Saterday at nyght they aryued at the Porte Noyre. Than they alyghted and mounted vp to the palays, and than they found the duches and all the other ladyes in the chapell hearynge of euensonge, eche of them praying for theyr lorde, for they were in greате feare of them: for they herde no maner of tydynges of them. And as sone as the duches sawe syr Brysebar, than her herte came to her. And than syr Brisebar kneled down

on his kne; but the duches would not suffre hym to knele no seasō; but reysed him vp. And than she demaunded tydynges of the duke, her husbonde. Than Jehannet stept forth to here some tydynges of Arthur. Than Brysebar said: Madame, my lorde the duke dothe ryght well, and he doth salute you by me: he is with my lorde the Kyng Emendus, who dooth to him righte great honour, and to al youre other lordes and knightes: and also, madame, my lorde Arthur, your son, doth humbly recommaund him to you, as he that is the best knyght and most honoured of al the world: and to you, fayre damoyssel Jehannet, he recommaundeth hym: and knowe you for certayne, that wythin these eyght dayes, as he shewed me, he wyl put you vnto great honoure. Therwyth Jehannet cast downe her loke to the erth, and gaue a great sigh. Madame, sayd Brysebar to the duches, behold yonder the gentyll Florence, doughter to the noble Kyng Emendus, who is comyng hyder to you, and bryngeth wyth her the Kyng of Orquene, her cosyn, and specyal frende to my lorde Arthur youre sonne: and also Duke Philyp of Sabary, Arthur, Hector, and mayster Steuen, is with her: and al the people are comyng to se you, and to bryng you to the myghty Kyng Emendus vnto the cite of Argence; and there I thinke shal be the mariage betwene Arthur, youre son, and the noble Florence. A! good Lorde! sayd the duches, I thanke the, syth thou hast gyuen me suche a chylde that dooth me soo moche honour. Syr Brysebar, sayd Jehannet, is this my lord Arthurs loue that is comyng hyder? Ye truely, fayre loue, sayd Brysebar. Certaynly, sayde Jehannet, I woulde gladly se her, and shal serue and loue her wyth a good herte: yet, notwythstandyng, I had rather haue had Arthur to haue bene my louer than hers. So they past forth y^e day & nighte. And in the mornyng there came messengers before, that shewed how that Florence wold be there at dyner. Than the duches, and al the other countesses, ladies, and damoiselles, dyd aray them right freshly, and mounted on theyr palfraies, and rode to encoūtre Florence. And at the last Brysebar sayd: Madame, yonder cometh Florence out of the forestes syde; and at the same tyme the Kynge of Orqueny and Arthur had a flight at an heron with a

gerfawcon, so that al the ladyes had syght therof. And whan Florence knew that it was the duches that was comyng towarde her, she descended out of her chariot, and the duches did alight fro her palfrey, and enbraced eche other with great ioy and feast. Than Florence said: Madam, ye be right heartely welcome into my country, as she that I am most gladdest to se of al women lyuyng. And whan the duches sawe her, she maruayled gretly of her gret beauty, and toke her by the hand, and sayd: Myn own dere lady! blessed be the houre that euer ye were borne! for there is not in al the world agayne none so gentyl and so fayre as ye be. Madam, sayd Florence, ye saye as it pleaseth you: but howe so euer it be, I am & shal be youre doughter and faythful louer; for your sonne Arthur is gyuen me by the king, mi fader: and so w^t Goddes grace he shal be mi lord and louer. And whan Jehannet herd that, her hearte trembled: how be it, whan she sawe Florence come so richly, and that she was of so gret beuty, she wissed in her hert that Florence had bene xxiiii. yeres elder than she was, for it greued her hert right sore, thassurance of her & of Arthur: how be it, she held her selfe contente, because of the gret honor and profyt of Arthur: & therew^t she wente to Florence & enbraced her, and sayde: Madame, ryght hye honoured quene! of you wyl I make myne own dere loue the floure of al other, the gentil Arthur. And whan Florence herd her, she demaunded of the duches what she was? & what she ment by her saying? Than Florence and the duches sate downe togider, and there the duches recoüted to Florēce all the hole mater as it was of Arthurs fyrst wife, & how y^t Jehannet was sent for into the forest, & how y^t she had alwaies loued Arthur, & called hī euer her lord and dere loue, and kept her self true to hī.

CAP. CXI.

HOW FLORENCE, BECAUSE OF THE DOUBT Y^t SHE HAD LEST Y^t JEHANNET SHOULD TAKE FRO HER ARTHUR, SHE GAUE HER TO GOVERNAR, & GAUE THEM THE RELME OF MORMAL, AND CAUSED THEYM TO BE ENSURED TOGYDER THE SAME HOURE; AND ALSO Y^e SAME TIME SHE CAUSED Y^e LADY MARGARET TO BE ENSURED TO MAISTER STEUEN.

WHAN that Florence had wel vnderstande the wordes of the duches concerning Jehānet and Arthur, than in her mynd she doubted that Jehānet shold let the loue betwene her and Arthur: than she aduised her selfe, and puruaied therfore right sagely. Than she called to her Arthur and y^e King of Orqueny, Duke Philip and the master, & so sate thē doun al togider in a company; and there she desyred the duches to recount before them al the hole matter betwene Arthur and Jehannet; and so she did. And whan the King of Orqueny had herd al the mater, he had therat gret ioy, & smyled thereat righte swetely, and sayd to Jehannet: As God helpe me, fayre, gentyl damoyse, ye haue right wel deserued that my ladi Florence do to you much honor and good; and, as helpe me God, if she do not, I shal prouyde for you right hyely, for the loue of y^e noble Arthur. Verely, said Florence, bi the grace of God, I shal make her a grete lady: cal to me Gouvernar: and incontynent he was brought to her: than he kneled doun before her. Than Florence said to the duches: Madame, by the fayth that ye owe to your lord, the Duke of Brytaine, and to your son Arthur, here beyng present, & by the saluacyō of your soule, tell me the trouth, wheder that youre son Arthur & this knyght Gouvernar be ony thīge of kynne & lignage togyder? As helpe me God, madame, quod the duchesse, they are no thyng of blode nor kynrede: how be it, I wold also y^t Gouvernar were my son, for he were well worthy; for he is a right noble knyght, & hath serued my son Arthur right nobly & truly: wherfore I

am sure my son Arthur wyll remembre him whan y^t he seeth his tyme. Wel, madame, sayd Florēce, we shall on our part remembre hym. And than she sayd to Gouvernar: Sir, I am well & credyibly enfourmed that ye haue serued Arthur well & truely, & nouryshed & kept him vp in his youth ryght well & nobly; therefore it is reason y^t now he make you somewhat amēdes: and to you, fayre damoyzell Jehānet, ye haue alwayes well & faythfully loued Arthur; wherfore ye shall in lykewyse haue amēdes made to you. Than she toke Jehānet by the hande, and sayde to Gouvernar: Syr knyght, here I geue vnto you thys fayre damoyzell Jehānet, to be your wyfe and spouse for euer; & to you, Jehānet, I gyue Gouvernar to be youre lord & husbāde: wherfore I wyll y^t eche of you do ensure other here before me. Madame, quod Gouvernar, I thāke your grace; syth it plese you I am contente: howe be it, madame, in no wyse wyll I do it w^tout I haue the licēce of my lorde Arthur. Than Arthur sayde: It pleaseth me ryght well: for I am cōtēt, syth it pleaseth my lady Florence. Than a chaplayne of the lady Florence dydde ensure them togyder. Than Florence sayd to Gouvernar: Frend! now haue ye a wife w^tout londe; wherfore, here in open audyence, I giue vnto you & to your eyres for euer, the noble realme of Mormall: & therof I make you kynge & lorde; so y^t ye hold it of Arthur, to whome I wyll that ye go and do him homage. Than Gouvernar did his feaute to Arthur, & Arthur receyued it with his eyen ful of water for ioie y^t he had. And whan the duchesse saw Gouvernar in that greate honour, she wepte for ioie. Than Gouvernar retourned to Florence & thanked her right humbly. Than the Kynge of Orqueney sayd to Florence: My right dere lady & cosyn! as God helpe me, ye haue done right wel & honourabli; for ye myghte not better haue employed your realme of Mormall than ye haue done. And than he embraced Gouvernour, and sayd: Gouvernar, I promyse you that ye shal haue faythfull cōūsel & helpe of me, & of min, at al times; & in likewyse so did promise him al the other kinges: and so than euery man bare hī honour as they sholde do to a king. Now lordes, quod Florence, yet haue I not done al y^t I wold do: but now, syth I haue begon, I wil make an ende. Than she called

forthe the fayre lady Margaret of Argenton & mayster Steuen, and sayd : Ye two haue serued me right faythfully & truli, wherof I thāke you bothe. Than she tooke the lady by the hande, and sayd : Myne owne gentil lady ! ye haue borne me fayth, loue, & honour, & swete company ; & ye haue bē euer right nere of my counsel : wherfore, madā, here I giue to you my frende & my clerke & gentyl knight, mayster Steuen, who hath kept & nourished me sith the beginning of my youth, & knowen the secretnes euer of my hert, & euer he hath borne the key of stedfastnes : fayre lady ! I gyue him vnto you : he is son to a kinge, and shal be a king yf he lyue, as he that is the most amyable clerke, swete, sage, curteys, honourable & true in all poyntes : & to you, mayster, I say ye shall haue my jewel : wherfore loue wel this lady Margaret, I pray you : ye shal be my frende & louer ; and I giue vnto you my frende & louer. Than the mayster kneled downe & thanked Florēce. Thā the noble Markes stept forth, who was vncle & gouernour of y^e lady Magaret, & thanked Florence w^t al his hert. Thā Florence called to her Duke Philip, and sayd : Freende ! I praye you retourne agayne hastely to the king, my fader, & shewe him how y^t I haue dysposed the realme of Mormal, & the lande of Argenton, & desyre hym that he wyll sende me his confirmacion in y^t behalfe, vnder his great seale.

Than Duke Philip toke his leue and departed, & rode to King Emendus, & recoūted to him al y^t Florence had cōmaunded him. And whan the kīg herde all that, he was right ioyous, for y^e loue of Arthur ; and so was al the courte. So than the king did confirme al Florēce desyre, & did send vnto her his letters patentes, sealed vnder his great seale.

And than Florēce was moūted into her chariot, & the Quene of Orqueney, and the duchesse, & Jehannet, w^t her ; & the coūteses rode eche by other next to the chariottes. Than the coūtesse of Neuers sayd to the Countesse of Foreste : Madam, this noble lady Florence hath done right wysely & nobly to make these mariages. That is true, quod the lady Forest ; she hath done it to thentent that Arthur shoulde not resorte to Jehannet, otherwise than reason & honour wolde. Thā the lady Rossillō sayd : Ye, now Florence

wil suffre theyr company in al honour & right. Thus these ladies rode forth talkyng til they came to the Porte Noyrè, where as they were iiii. dayes in great feast & ioye: and there eueri day Gouvernar talked of his mariage, & passed the tyme in al honour w^t his lady, Jehannet; & the mayster in lykewise w^t his lady Margaret, & sayde how that it was good to serue such a lorde & such a lady, y^t so hyely rewarded theyr seruantes & frendes. And by that tyme Duke Phylp was retourned fro the kynges court, and brought w^t hym the letters patētes of the kynges: & there she deliuered to Gouvernar & to the mayster the sayd letters. Than Duke Phylp sayd to Florence: Madame, the kyng, your fader, desyreth you to make as grete haste as ye can to y^e cite of Argence, so y^t ye may be there on Mondaye nexte comyng, for there the kyng wyll be redy agaynst your comyng. Than Florence made her redy, & on y^e next mornynge betymes departed, & all her noble company w^t her, & dydde so moche by her iourneys, y^t at last she was w^tin the sight of the hye walles & toures of y^e cite of Argence.

Thā the Kyng Emendus, whan he knewe of theyr comyng, he called all his barons to moūt on theyr horses; and the King Alexander, & the King of Valefoūde, & the King of Ismaelyte, & suche knyghtes of the Kyng of Mormalles as was abyden w^tin the courte tyll suche seasō as the kyng had purueyed for them a newe king. And all the people of the cite of Argenton went out to mete Florence, Arthur, & theyr lady Margaret: & the people of the londe of Mormall cam to Gouvernar, & receyued him as theyr lorde & kyng, & dyd to hym homage. Than they desyred to see theyr newe lady and quene, who as than was in the charyot w^t Florence, apparayled in vestures ryall. And whan Florence knew theyr desyre, she caused her to be takē out of the chariot & set on a goodli palfray, to thentent that euery mā might se her. And so than they were gladde to se her, for she was a ryght fayre & a goodly lady: & so they made to her reuerence & honour, as to theyr ladi & quene. And the people of the londe of Argenton receyued mayster Steuen for theyr souerayne lorde, & specyally syr Emery: and in this wyse they came to the cite of Argēce.

Than ther met with them the archebishop and al y^e hole clergy of the cyte, & euery man to his power made great feest and ioye. Than ther alyght to Florence, & al her kinges & quenes, dukes & dutchesses, erles & cou^tesses, lords & ladies, knightes and damoisselles. Than the noble King Emēdus came oute of his palais, and receiued them right honourably, euery person after theyr estate. Than ther began great feest and ioye, & so went vp to the palays; and there this noble company were togyder in grete ioye and tryumpe.

CAP. CXII.

HOW ARTHUR WEDDED Y^e FAYRE FLORENCE, DOUGHTER TO THE MIGHTY KYNG EMENDUS, WITH GREAT HONOUR & TRIUMPHE, AND KYNGE GOUERNAR WEDDED THE FAYRE JEHANNET, AND MAYSTER STEUEN WEDDED THE FAYRE LADY MARGARETE OF ARGENTON, ALL IN ONE DAYE AND ONE HOURE.

WHAN that Arthur saw so noble a seynory & company wer assembled togyder, he went to King Emendus, & said: Syr, and it like your grace, ther is now in this cite assembled ryght hie and noble people; for here is now vi. kinges, vi. dukes, & x. erles, besyde other lordes & knyghtes: wherfore, syr, may it please your grace to kepe open court for a certayne space; for I beleue verily ther was neuer seen, in one daye, so many noble men assembled togyder. As God helpe me, sone, quod the king, I am cōtente, and so shal it be; therfore make ye puruayaūce therfore, as ye shal thinke it best for your honour & myn: & I wyll y^e wedde Florence, my doughter, here in this cite; and Gouvernar, Jehannet; & the master, the lady Margaret. Syr, quod Arthur, in y^e name of God al this shal be done accordynge to your cōmaundement. Syr, Kyng Alexander shal abyde & be lodged

here w^t you in the palays ; & my lord & fader, the Duke of Brytayne, & all y^e other kynges & prynces, shal be wel lodged in the cite, in noble & fayre houses. And than Arthur made the temple to be apparayled for himselfe to be maryed in ; & the abbey of Saynct Germayne for Gouvernar. Than there were jogelers, gesters, & mynstrelles, gadered togyder to a greate nombre, soo y^t they made great myrthe & ioie in euery parte of the cite, so that ther was neuer seen none suche before in no place. Than Hector caused a faire quintayne to be pyght vp in the myddes of the cyte : & therat ran these yonge knyghtes, brekyng and sheueringe of theyr speres ; and some spake of makinge of a tournay. Than was the dolphyn mounted clene armed, holdynge a greate & a mighty spere in his hande : & the same tyme, the Kyng Emendus, the Kyng Alexander, & Florēce, the Duke of Brytaine, and Arthur, wer lokyng out at the windowes of the palais ; & al other kinges & princes were in lykewyse beholding the lusty knyghtes breking of speres in euery strete of the cite ayenst y^e quyntaynes that there were made & ordeyned ; & therwyth the dolphyn ran at the chefe quintayne, & gaue theron suche a stroke, y^t he claue the shelde y^t hanged theron clene asonder, & brake his spere all to sheuers, & so passed forth and kept his course : and he was greatly praised of al the prynces and barōs, ladies and damoysselles : and thei demaūded who it was ? and it was shewed thē how it was one of the Frēshe lordes : wherof many of that coūtre had great despyte, and spake therof in great displeasure. And at last a knight of y^e coūtre of Sorolois, who was called sir Bertrand of the Toure, said to his felowes : Lordes and felawes ! I se well y^t these Frenshe men, that be nowe here in this coūtre, be of great pryde, and of fyerse coūtenaūce : and by the occasiō of theim we are reputed of the lesse valure ; for we maye here wel how generally thei be praised ; therefore shame haue thei y^t wil suffre it ony lēger : wherefore let vs take a tournay against thē, and thā we shal know what thei cā do. In the name of God so let it be, said diuerse other. So therw^t water was brought into the hal, and the tables laid. Than to the court ther came kinges, dukes, erles, barōs, and knyghtes, fro al partes. So than Kyng Emendus, King

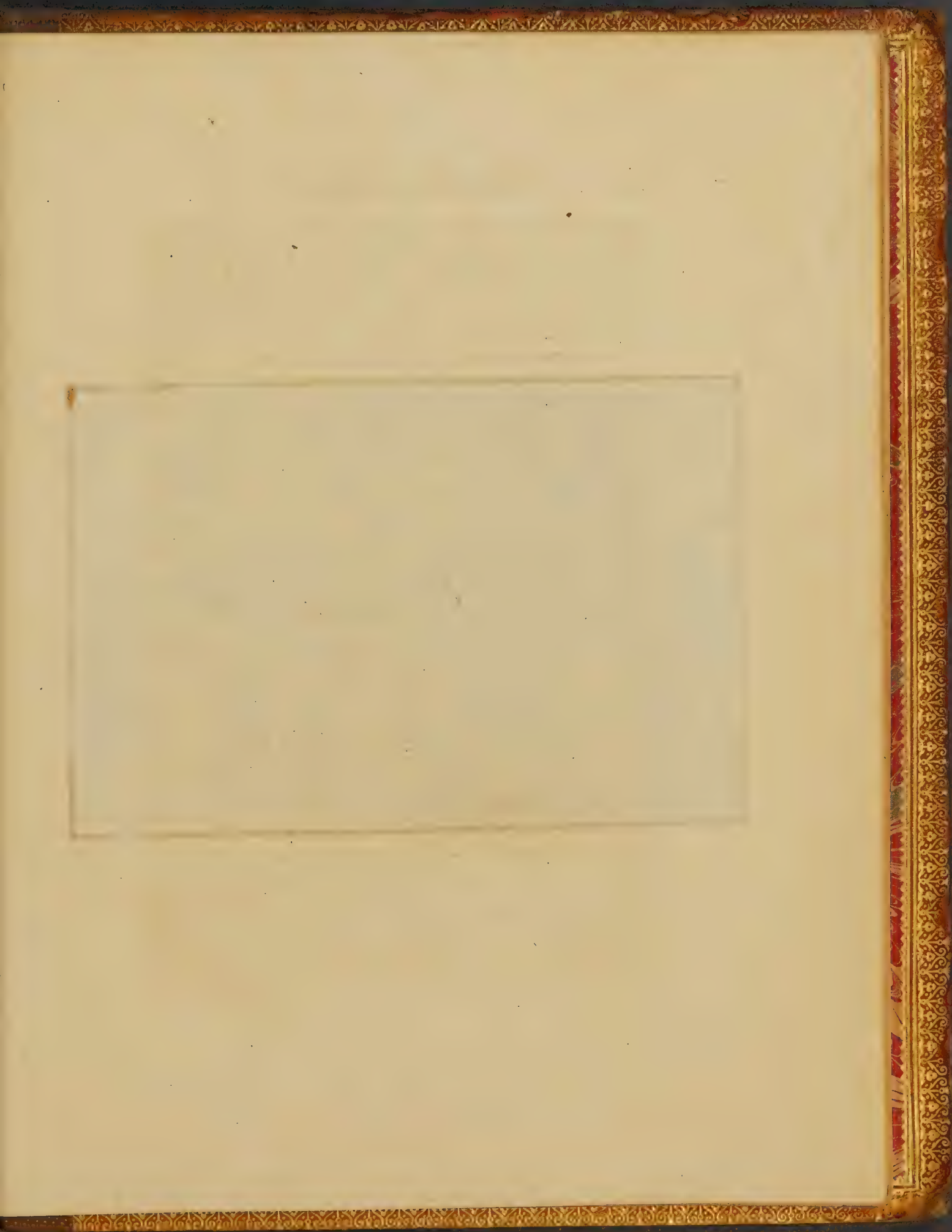
Alexander, and the Duke of Britaine, sate togider at one table; and al the other kinges sate one ayenst another, and euery man after his estate; and ther thei were right rychely serued. And whan dyner was done, & the tables taken away, some went into the chambres and behelde the ladyes daūce; and some wente & loked oute at the fayre windowes. And thā syr Bertrāde, and syr Angele, an other knyght, thei ii. went sporting togider, & spake of the takynge of this tournay ayenst the Frenshe men. And they founde syr Clemēsō & syr Perdicas lenyng in a window. And thā they demaūded of syr Bertrande wherof he & his felaw dyde talke? And he answered, & sayd, how y^t it was of the turnay. And whan syr Clemenson hard their mindes, he was wel of the same accorde, & sayde: Let vs go to Duke Goubert of Plaumes, & know of him wheder he wil be of y^e same mynde. So thā thei wēt to the duke. And whan he saw them, he smyled, and sayd: Welcome be ye, syr knightes! what tidinges is ther with you? Veryly, syr, quod Bertrande, we say y^t we would fayne know what people these Frenshe men be wyth their swerdes: it is said how that thei did bere them self valiauntly at the Blaūche Toure ayenst the emperour: how be it, we know it not, for we were not there present; therfore, syr, we are in mynde to make a tournay ayenst them; and we wold know your mynde, wheder ye wyll be on our syde or not. And whā the Duke Gouberte harde their myndes, it pleased him right wel, & sayd: Let vs go to King Emēdus, & desyre graūt of him for this tournay.

And so thei al went togider and entred into the chambre where as King Emendus, & King Alexander of Malogre, and al the other erles of Fraūce wer: there was also Hector, Duke of Orgoule, & the Dolphin of Vien, & the lord Beauieu, the Marshal of Myrpois, & the lord De la Laūde. Than the Duke Gouberte said to Kinge Emendus: Syr, beholde here this dolphyn, who truly is a gentyl knyght; & verily he made yesterday a fayre course at a quintaine, wherof he was gretely praised, and not without a good cause; and he hath therby, syr, quykened so the hartes of the knightes of this your countre, so y^t thei haue a gret desire to make a turnay here in this cyte, yf it please you to gyue us leue: &, sir, we

would be right gladde and ioyous if it wold please some of these Frēshe lordes & knyghtes to come forth & play them w^t vs in this tournay: syr, we would take it for great loue, and pray thē therof ryght hertely. Veryly, syr, quod the Kyng of Malogre, we shal not fayle them for so lytel a thing; yf it please them let it be done to morow next. And so be it, quod syr Bertrande. In the name of God, quod Kyng Emendus, we wil y^t it shal not be to morow; for to morow we wyll make the solempnysacyon of the weddyng of Arthur & of my doughter Florence; & of Gouvernar & Jehannet; & of the mayster & the lady Margarete: but the fourth day after, I am cōtent y^t this tournay be done. Wel, quod Kyng Alexander, it shall be as it pleaseth you.

Than the Duke Goubert, syr Bertrāde, and their cōpany, departed fro the kyng and wēt down into the palays, and ther thei shewed to all the other knyghtes of their cōūtre, how y^t thei had taken a tournay against the Frenshe men, to be holdē the fourth day after y^e mariage; & so there wer to the nombre of v. M. that promised to turnay togider of one part ayenst the Frenshe men, & made their auauntes how y^t thei wold bere down to the erth al the Frenshemen, & wyne al their horses. So this daye ther was greate feest & ioye throughout al y^e palays tyl it was nyght: so euery man than went to theyr restes tyl the next mornynge.

The nexte morning betimes, King Emēdus, and all other kinges & noble lordes, did ryse. Thā the king caused Arthur to be apparailled in vestures ryal lyke a kyng: he had on a kyrtel of flamig grene like an emeraude, & a mantel of scarlet furred w^t ermynes. And so he stode before al y^e kīges w^t a freshe lyuely colour: & he was byg and hyer by the head thā ony other. And ther was hold before him, by iii. grete lordes, a rich crowne of golde, a septer royal, & a naked swerde: in signifyeng that he was chefe chāpyō of al the realme, & al y^t appertaineth to the crowne of Soroloys. Thā y^e duke, his fader, beheld hī wel, & y^e water dasht into his eyē for ioye that he had to se his sone in the great honour. Thā tharchebisshop was redy in his pōtificalibus to do thobseruaūce: & so w^t great noyse of minstralsy Arthur was rially brought to chirche. And than Florēce was apparailled like a





great quene as she was, crowned w^t golde: & the Quene of Orqueny wēt on he^r one syde, & the Quene of Ismaelite on her other side, somewhat behind her; & al other quenes, dutchesses, cou^tesses, & ladies, cam after her. And the King Alexander & the Kig of Orqueny, her cosyn, led her to chirche: and there Arthur maryed her with great ioye. And ther was so great feest, ioy, and bruite made, y^t none coude scāt here other bicause of the noyse of the instrumētes. Also Gouvernar was in the abbay of S. Germaines, apparailled lyke a king, and with him was Duke Philip, the Dolphin, and Hector, and al the barōs of Mormall: and ther he wedded Jehannet w^t moche great ioye & pleasure. And also the gētyl mayster was fresshely apparailled lyke y^e sone of a king: he was alwayes free and swete of hert, w^t a smylyng countenaūce, & a gracious clerke aboue al other, & also ryght good & a valiaūt hardy knyght: and with him ther was the King of Valefounde, his fader, who hadde ryght greate ioye whan he sawe his sonne gentyll and so gracious: there was also with hym syr Neuelon, syr Brysebar, syr Morant, & syr Rowlande of Bigor. Thā the maister wedded the faire lady Margarete w^t great ioye & triumphe. And whā his weddyng was done, he mou^ted on a great courser, & a mantel of grene about him, & the kyng his fader by hym, & other knightes to the nōbre of v.C.; & suche noyse of minstralsi before him, as though all the world should haue riuen asonder: & in that wyse he came to the court of King Emēdus. And also there came King Gouvernar to the courte, after y^t he was wedded, w^t great ioye & myrth. Than ther was made the gretest ioye & feest y^t coude be deuised: & y^e mayster kept his feest at syr Emeries; & Gouvernar at thabbey of S. Germaine; and Arthur kept the court in y^e palays: & this feest endured a hole moneth. Thus Arthur laye y^t nyght w^t the gentyll Florence, & the same night engendred on her a fayre sone, whom the Kyng Alexander dyde holde ouer the fonte, & was named Alexander, after his name: the whiche chylde was afterwarde emperour of Ynde the More, and of Constantinoble, as ye shal here more playnly here after.

CAP. CXIII.

HOW THE FRENSSHE KNIGHTES, & THOSE OF SOROLOYS, OF ARGENCE, OF ORQUENEY, OF MORMAL, OF ISMAELYTE, OF VALEFOUNDE, AND OF SABARY, DYDE TOURNAY TOGYDER; WHEREOF ARTHUR AND GOVERNAR HAD THE HONOUR.

THE fourth daye after the maryage, durynge the feest, Duke Goubert, syr Bertrande, syr Clemenson, & syr Perdycas, went to King Alexander, and desyred him to remembre the tournay y^t thei had enterprysed: & with tho wordes Arthur came to them. Than Kynge Alexander answered, & sayde: Fayre lordes! in Goddes name let it be done to morowe. Than he dyd sende for all y^e erles, barons, and knyghtes, of Fraūce, & shewed them of the tournay to be holden the next day; wherof they had great ioye: & euery man cōmaūded that theyr harneys should be made redy ayenst the next morning. And than the tidinges sprad ouer al the citie, how that y^e Frensshe men should tournay ayenst the knyghtes of that cōūtre, who were in nōbre x. ayenst one Frensshe mā. And whan Arthur vnderstode y^t, he sente for Gouvernar. And whan he was come to hym, he drew him apart, and sayd: Frende! to morowe shal be the tourney agaynst our men: wherfore we ought to kepe & defend them: wherfore we must aduyse vs how we shal do; for I se the knyghtes of this cōūtry haue gret enuy at these Frenche knyghtes, & they are x. tymes as many as our people be: wherfore I doubt me that our knyghtes should haue some vylany; & I had rather dye than suffre y^t: therfore I shal shew you what we shall do: whan the tourney shal be to morow begon, I shal come to your lodgyng as pryuely as I can, and there ye shal abide me: and thā we wil arme vs both in straūge harnes, to thentent that we sholde not be knowen, and thā we wil go to the turney and helpe our knyghtes, for I think they shal haue grete nede of vs. And Hector and the Dolphin shal be in the fyrst front; and, yf I can, Duke Phylp,

the mayster, and Brysebar, shal not turney agaynste our knightes, because they haue bene in Fraunce, and haue had there righte good chere. And as for al the remenant I care not for. As for them, they be oure frendes, and lothe I were to displese theim. Kepe secrete this matter, y^t no man know therof; for I wyl that we do this as couertly as we can. In the name of God so be it, quod Gouvernar. And so euery man drew to his rest for that day.

And the next mornynge betimes euery man rose, and so went and herd masse, and after toke a sop in wine. Than the knightes ran to theyr harnes on euery side. Than hornes and trompets began to sowne in euery strete of y^e city. And than Duke Goubert and al his company wer redy aparailed, and so yssued into the felde. Than Kyng Alexander dyd arme hym, and al his company. Than Arthur came to King Emendus, and wyth hym was the Kyng of Orqueney. Than Arthur said: Syr, the knightes of this your couⁿtry are x. tymes as many as are these French knightes; and, syr, they are of suche condicyons, that they wyl neuer recule back to die: therfore, syr, I know not the myndes of these your knightes; for yf they think to ouercome them and seke therfore, it cā be none otherwise but y^t many shall dye in the quarell. Syr, me thinketh therfore y^t it were well done y^t I sholde cause be armed v. hondred knightes, and take them with me to kepe y^t none yl sholde be done. In the name of God, quod Kyng Emendus, so be it. Than departed Arthur, for he had that he desyred. Than he toke wth hym syr Brysebar, and syr Tercelin, his neuew, & did shit the chambre dore after them. Than he said too syr Brisebar: Syr, I loue you, & take you of my preuy counsayle. It is so, there be many knightes ayenst oure Frenche men, for I se well they are farre ouer matched, wherfore I wyl go ayde them: wherfore I wyl haue syr Terceli armed in my harneys, for he is nye of the same bygnes y^t I am of; & he shal take wth hym v. hondred knightes wel armed, & go too the turnay to kepe the felde, that no hurt shal be done: and no mā shal know but y^t it were I. And ye, syr Brisebar, & I, wil go to Gouvernars lodging as priuely as we can; and there he & I wil arm

vs in some straunge harneys, to thentent y^t no man shal know vs : wherfore I pray you dyscouer me not.

So than syr Tercelyn was armed in Arthurs armur, & toke w^t hī v. hondred, & yssued out of the citie w^t gret noyse of trompetes and tabours. Than Duke Goubert sayd : Yonder cometh Arthur to kepe the feld, to thentent that we shold do none outorage too these Frenche men. So than in the first front was Duke Hector, the Dolphin, and the lord De la Laund. Than all the other kynges and the Duke of Britaine mounted on theyr horses to beholde the tourney. And also thyder came the Kyng of Valefound, and mayster Steuen, hys son, wyth hym, and v. hondred knyghtes in his company. And whan the Frenche men were entred into the fyelde, they were not the x. part so many as the other were. And whan mayster Steuen saw that, he said to his fader : Syr, beholde yonder the knyghtes of greate hardynes, seyng theyr countenaunces; for they bee nothyng abasshed for al that they be soo farre ouermatched. Than Arthur wente pryuely to thabbey of Saynt Germaines to Gouvernar, and there they armed them in straūge harnes, and moūted on ii. grete coursers. And whan the Frenche men were arenged, than Hector aduysed wel syr Rowland of Bygor, who was comynge toward hym. Than Hector rusht to his hors, and encoūtrede sir Rowland so rudely, y^t he tumbled ouer his hors tayle. Than Kyng Emendus sayd to the Duke of Brytayne : Syr, this beginnyng is on your parte. Than the dolphyn encountred at one frusshe syr De la Laund and syr Morand, & ouerthrewe them bothe to the earth. Than the turney began to be maruailous fiers; but the Frenche knyghtes were sore ouermatched : wherfore they endured muche payn. And at last Arthur & Gouvernar came towarde the prese al disguysed. Than Arthur sayde too Gouvernar : Syr, whan ye se Hector, bydde hym kepe vs ii. company, but be wel ware that he knowe you not. With a good wyl, syr, quod Gouvernar : and so they rode forth fayre & softly. And whā Duke Philip saw them comyng, he sayd to the kyng : Syr, beholde yonder cometh two straūge knyghtes : it semeth by theyr comyng that they are afraid of the fyrst strokes. Therw^t they aproched to the tourney. Than Gouvernar shewed too Arthur

syr Bertrand, by whom the turnay was fyrst begon, and also the Duke Gouberte, who gaue many gret strokes w^t his sworde; and therw^t Arthur & Gouvernar stode styl and beheld them. Than Kinge Emendus sayde: I thynke yonder ii. knyghtes doubte greatly these strokes. Ye, syr, they do wisely, quod Duke Philip. Therw^t Gouvernar ran at sir Bertrand & bare him clene out of his sadel. Mary! sayd the kyng, I wene we haue mocked yonder knyghtes wrongfully: we shal se sone what ech other knight can do. Therw^t Arthur ran at Duke Goubert, and encountred him so rudely, y^t he sent bothe horse and knight all to therth in a hepe. Than he toke his sworde & layd on round about him so, that he confounded al y^t euer he attayned vnto: & Gouvernar was not behynd for his parte. Saynt Mary! quod the kyng, who knoweth yonder knyghtes? they seme to be the best knyghtes of al the world. Syr, sayde the Kyng of Orqueney, but y^t I se Arthur yonder withoute the felde, I wolde saye elles playnly that it were he. By that tyme Arthur had broken that gret prese. Than he espyed where the dolphin, & Hector, & the Erle of Mountbelial, and xxx. of their cōpany, were sore ouerladen; for there were many on them. And by that time the Duke Gouberte was horsed new agayne. Than Arthur ran at hym, and strake hym soo rudely on the helme, soo that he was thereby in a traunce, and hys horse bare hym all about the fyelde, tyll at the laste he came before Kyng Emendus where as he was; and than he came to him selfe againe, and sayd: Al the deuylles of hell take suche a carpenter, and he that fyrste brought him into this countrey! Than Arthur was sore handled in the prease; but than he russed forth and charged so his swerde on these knyghtes in suche wise, that he and Gouvernar bet downe al that euer was before them. And whan y^t the Frenche knyghtes saw y^t these ii. knyghtes did helpe and ayde thē so nobly, than they toke on them so gret hardines, that they confounded al that were before thē. Than knyghtes of the other part sayd: Let vs fle away; for and we abide, deth wil folow therby: and so than they fled away on euery syde fro him. Than the king, & suche as were in his cōpany, and al other y^t dyd behold the tournay, had great maruaile of the dedes of the ii. knyghtes. And mayster

Steuen perceiued wel the play of Arthur: than he knewe well y^t it was he, and said softly to hymselfe, A! gentyl knyght! y^t cannest not fayle thy frendes! I cānot suffre any lenger that y^t shold endure more trauayle. Than the mayster blewe suche a blast, y^t there rose sodenlye in the tourney suche a myst, y^t one could scant se an other. Thā Arthur and Gouvernar departed as priuelye as they could, & went to thabbey of S. Germain; and so than euery man went to their own lodgēges. And as sone as thei wer vnarmed, al the Frenche men went to King Alexāders lodging, and they went all togider to the kinges court: and the King Emendus did welcome them, and made to them ryghte gret fest and ioie, and was right glad of the gret prowes that he had sene in them that day. Than the king toke King Alexander by the hand, and demaūded of hī what ii. knyghtes that they were that so nobly dyd tourney on their part that day? and where that they were? And he answered, and sayd: Syr, I can not tell you what they be, nor where they are becom. Thā the kyng enquiryed of al the other if they could tell any tydynges of them? And whan the kyng sawe that he could haue noo knowledge of them, he fell sodeynlye in a greate studye: and as he stode soo musyng, Arthur and Gouvernar came to the court. Than the kyng embraced them, and demaunded yf they knewe any thyng of those twoo knyghtes that hadde doone so great prowesse? And they answered, that they knewe nothyng of them. So than they washed and wente to dyner: and after dyner they sported theym euery man as he lyked best. And as Kyng Emendus sawe these knyghtes sportyng of them in the palays, he remembred the two knyghtes, and again demaunded yf any body knewe them? And whan the mayster saw the kinge in that case, he came to him, and said fayre and softly: Syr, beleue certaynly that these twoo knyghtes that ye desyre so sore to knowe was Arthur and Gouvernar. Than the kyng had ryghte great ioie; and so wente to theym, and embraced wyth wepyng eyen for ioie, and sayd in open audyence: Syth I haue gyuen my doughter to Arthur, I repente me not; for I could not haue bestowed her more nobly than on hym; for I coulede not haue beleued to haue seene so muche noblenes in one knyght, as I

haue sene in hym this day : than the kynge made so greate feast and ioye, that it was maruayle to beholde. Thus endured the feast xv. dayes. Than all the ladyes would returne into Fraunce; wherof Florence was right sorowful : how be it, she dyd soo muche, that they all abode other xv. dayes, & so than they departed.

Than King Emendus, & Florence, and al other lordes and ladies, broughte Gouvernar & Jehannet into theyr londe of Mormal : and there they were receiued with greate ioy and honor, and taried there viii. dais.

CAP. CXIV.

HOWE AFTER THE MARYAGE OF ARTHUR, THE BARONS AND LADIES OF FRAUNCE RETURNED INTO THEYR OWNE COUNTRYES, EXCEPT KING ALEXANDER, WHOM KING EMENDUS KEPT STYL, & MADE VNTO HIM GRETE CHERE: AND HE TARYED THERE SOO LONGE, TYLL THAT FLORENCE WAS DELYUERED OF A FAYRE SON, WHO KINGE ALEXANDER HELD ON THE FONT.

AFTER that these viii. dayes were fynnyshed, than the Frenche lordes, ladyes, & knyghtes, toke theyr leue of Kyng Emendus, who conuayed them ii. dayes iourney. Than King Emendus and Florēce toke theyr leue of the Duke of Brytayne, and of al the other lordes & knyghtes, ladies and damosels : and Florēce requyred them to retourne into y^e countrey agayn as shortly as they myght; for she sayd she wolde gladly haue gone w^t thē, sauynge for kepyng of companye w^t the kynge, her fader : soo eche of them kyssed other & so departed; and Arthur & Gouvernar dyd conuey theym a lytel waye. Than the Duke of Brytayne sayd to Arthur, his sonne : Good sonne ! thynke alway to plesse wel the noble King Emendus. And Arthur promised him so to do; & than

he toke his leue of the duches, his moder, & kissed ech other with wepyng eyen : so than the duke and the duches toke their way homeward. And Arthur & Gouvernar returned to the kyng, and found him and King Alexander togyder; for Kyng Emendus had so entreted Kyng Alexander, that he promysed hym to abyde in his company for a certayne space : and so he abode there so long in gret myrth and plesure, tyl at last the noble quene Florēce was brought a bed, and had a fayre sonne. And on a fayre day, as King Alexander, Arthur, and Gouvernar, were sportynge them by a ryuer syde, there came a messenger rydynge to them a gret pace, and sayd to Arthur : Syr, I haue brought you good tidings : syr, Kyng Emendus doth send you worde how y^t your noble quene Florence is broughte a bed of a fayre sonne : wherfore he desyreth you to come as fast as ye can; for y^e kyng will desire King Alexander and King Gouvernar to hold him on the font. And whā Arthur herd y^t, he was righte ioyful, and said to the messēger : I giue the for thy tidynges C.li. lond where so euer yⁿ louest best to haue it. Thā the squier thāked hī right hūbly. So than they rode forth, and at last came to King Emendus, who made right gret ioy of them; and w^t gret solempnitie the chyld was than brought to church & cristened, and had to his godfathers King Emendus, King Alexander, and King Gouvernar, and was called Alexander. And at their cōming fro the church there was made suche feast, and chere, and reuel, y^t it was wonder to behold; for there was no thinge y^t could haue made King Emendus more ioyful than he was : for he had than al his request of God : for his prayer euer was, that Florence might haue an heyre male of her body borne to succede in his realme : and this chyld was the most fair chyld toward of the world, and wel fourmed, byg and myghty : and he had on hys sholdre a fayre crosse as ruddy as a fresh rose; wherof Kyng Emendus sayde, that it was a sygne that he should attayne to much honour : for so he did after indede; for he was, or he died, emperor of Ynde the More, and of Constantynoble, and conquered by his prowes dyuers other realmes.

CAP. CXV.

HOW KING ALEXANDER RETURNED INTO HIS COUNTRY, AND LED
W^t HYM ARTHUR, GOUERNAR, HECTOR, AND MASTER STEUEN;
& TARYED IN BRITAYNE SO LONG, TYL FLORENCE SENT FOR
ARTHUR, BECAUS Y^t HER FATHER, KYNG EMENDUS, WAS DE-
PARTED THIS LIFE, WHEREFORE SHE MADE GRET LAMENTACION.

WHAN that Kyng Alexander had bene a longe season with
Kyng Emendus, he toke leue of hym, & retourned into Fraunce:
& there went wyth hym Arthur, Gouvernar, Hector, and mayster
Steuens. And within a whyle after that they were departed, King
Emendus, what for the grete ioye y^t he had of his son, & for suche
labour as he toke befor, he fell seke, & laye in his bedde: &, as
the story sayth, he layd but vii. wekes but that he dyed. And
Kyng Alexander, & suche other as went wyth hym, rode so longe
by their journeyes tyll at laste they aryued in the lond of Brytayne.
Than a messenger wēt before to the duke, & shewed how y^t they
wolde be wyth hym on the Monday next comynge. And whan
the duke herde that, he was neuer so ioyefull before. Than the
duke sent for al his lordes & ladies of hys coūtre, y^t they sholde
be w^t him at y^e receyuyng of his son Arthur, & of such other as
came wyth hym; & so they dyd: & the same daye Arthur aryued
there, & was receyued w^t gret feest and ioye; the whiche feest
endured viii. dayes. Than all they cōuayed Kyng Alexander
in to his owne realme. It nedeth not to be demaunded wheder
that Arthur and his cōpany had there good chere or not.

CAP. CXVI.

HOW ARTHUR WAS SENT FOR BECAUSE OF THE DETH OF KING
EMENDUS; AND HOW Y^t HE WAS CROWNED KYNG OF SOROLOYS.

ARTHUR and his cōpany were a grete season w^t Kyng Alexander, and hadde ryght good chere. And on a day, as he sat at the table, there came in a messāger fro his lady Florence; and he kneled downe; and Arthur dyd arise, & went to hym, and receyued of hym a letter, sent to hym fro Florence; the whiche Arthur incontinent did breke vp: & therin he found how that the myghty Kyng Emendus was deade; wherof he & al that cōpany made right great sorow. Than Arthur desyred Kyng Alexander y^t he wolde go w^t him agayne into the realme of Soroloys; & he graunted him so to do w^t a right good herte.

So thā incontinent they apparayled for their departing, & so mounted on theyr horses, & dyd so much by theyr journeys, y^t they aryued in y^e realme of Soroloys, & there they fōude Florence making right great sorow for the death of the kyng her fader: but as sone as she saw her lorde Arthur her herte reuiued in suche wise, that she forgat in a maner halfe her sorowe. Than the next day the corps was borne to the chyrche, & with great solempnite there he was ryally buried, as it appertayned to such a noble prince. Than w^tin a whyle after Kyng Alexander sayd, that it was tyme to make purueyaūce for Arthurs crownacion. Than there was sent for al the kinges, dukes, erles, barons, knightes, and squyers, and al theyr kinne and frendes; and there came thyther people wythout nombre. Thā Arthur was there, wyth greate triumphe, crowned wythe golde, and toke homage of euery man. And after his crownacion the feast endured viii. dayes, euery man makinge greate ioy saue Florence, who was styll in greate sorow for the death of her fader. And after this great feast and ioye, and that

euery man had made homage to Arthur for theyr kingdomes, dukedomes, and baronies, and for all theyr landes, than euery man departed into theyr owne countreys. And euer after, Arthur, Gouvernar, Hector, and the mayster, loued eche other, and helde so fast together, that none of theyr enemies durste neuer approche on none of them: and so they used theyr lyues in great honour and loue: & peas and union was euer bytwene them & theyr subiectes; for as long as they liued there was neuer none of them that euer moued any warre agaynst them. Thus Arthur and Florence raygned in greate prosperite, drad and sore doubted of all the worlde, and dyd many fayre conquestes; for he cōquered, or he died, viii. realmes, and diuerse countreys, and ryche seygno-ryes; but he liued not longe after.

CAP. CXVII.

HERE IS DEUYSED HOW LONGE THAT ARTHUR LYUED, AND HOWE
THAT HE WAS BURIED.

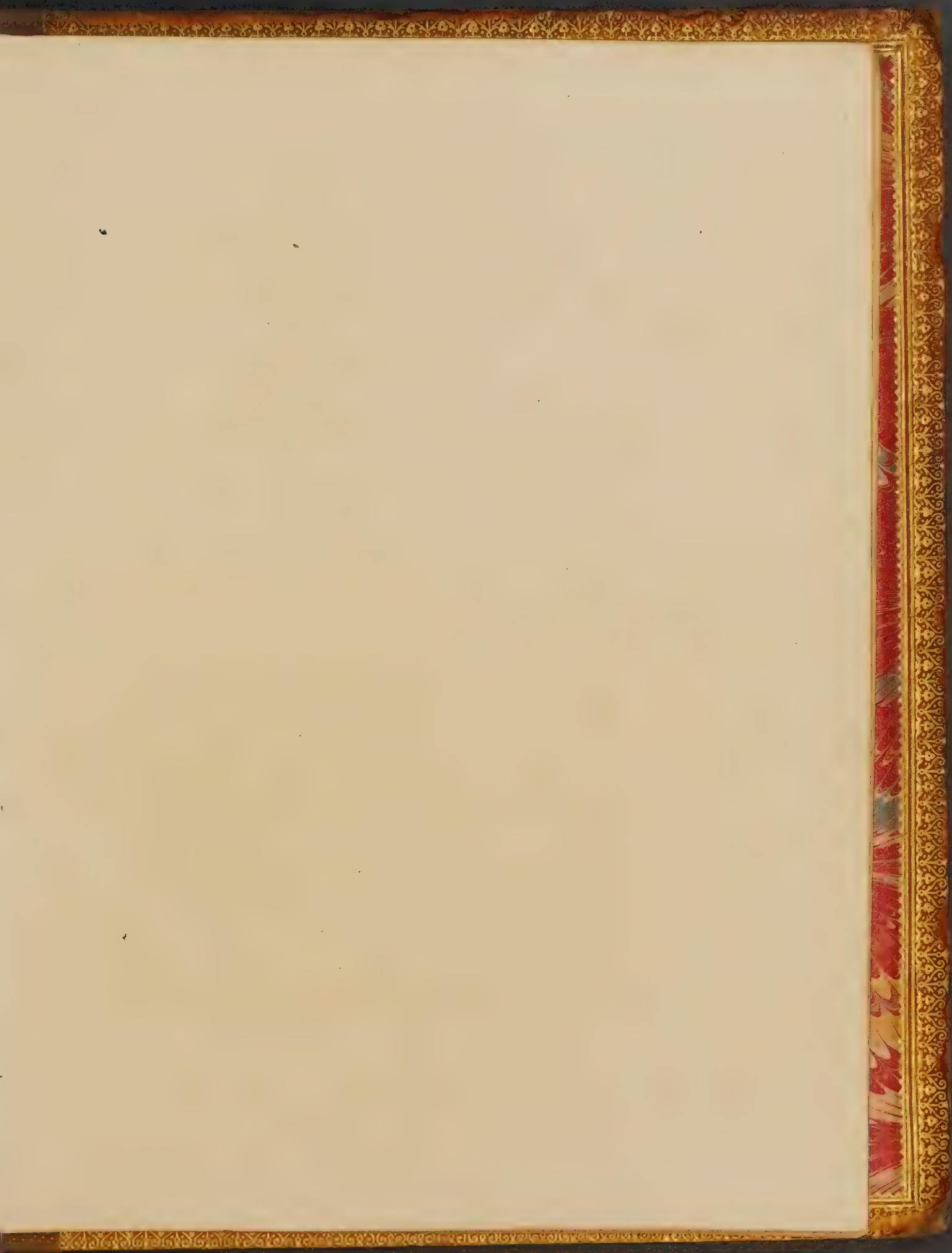
THE historie recounteth that the noble Arthur lyued but xxxii. yere, and thā he died; & the Quene Florence, whome he loued so well, dyed for sorowe: & so they were bothe buryed with great solempnite, & layde both in the tombe with Kinge Emendus; on the whiche tombe there was wrytē this epitaphe: Here lyeth the myghty Kyng Emēdus, Arthur, and Florence his wife, who ledde so good lyfe togyder, that they wer neuer dyspleased eyther wyth other. And Gouvernar, Hector, and the mayster, made grete sorowe for the deth of Arthur: & the yonge Alexander, son to Arthur & to Florence, was in the guy yng of Kynge Gouvernar, of Hector, & of the gentyll mayster Steuen; who afterwarde was Emperour of Ynde & of Constantinoble.

And thus endeth the hystory of the valyaunte knyght Arthur, son to the Duke of Brytayne; & of the noble lady Florence, doughter to the mighty Kyng Emēdus, kyng of the realme of Soroloys. And all those that redeth or heareth this history, I pray God sende them blysse perdurable. Amen.

Here endeth the Hystory of Arthur of Lytell Brytayne.

Imprynted at London, in Powles church yeard, at the sygne of the Cocke, by Roberte Redborne.

FINIS.



Allen b/cd/

Rupert's \$ c. ed (for repairing)
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